

THE HAPPY PRINCE AND OTHER SHORT STORIES

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THE HAPPY PRINCE AND OTHER SHORT STORIES

THE HAPPY PRINCE

OSCAR WILDE

High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold. For eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt.

He was very much admired indeed. 'He is as beautiful as a weathercock,' remarked one of the Town Councillors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; 'only not quite so useful,' he added, fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

'Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?' asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. 'The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything.'

'I am glad there is some one in the world who is quite happy,' muttered a disappointed man as he gazed at the wonderful statue.

'He looks just like an angel,' said the Charity Children as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks, and their clean white pinafores.

'How do you know?' said the Mathematical Master, 'you have never seen one.'

'Ah! but we have, in our dreams,' answered the children. The Mathematical Master frowned and looked very severe, for he did not approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city a little Swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful Reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her.

'Shall I love you?' said the Swallow, who liked to come to the point at once, and the Reed made him a low bow. So he flew round and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

'It is a ridiculous attachment,' twittered the other Swallows, 'she has no money, and far too

many relations;' and indeed the river was quite full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came, they all flew away.

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady-love. 'She has no conversation,' he said, 'and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with the wind.' And certainly, whenever the wind blew, the Reed made the most graceful curtsies. 'I admit that she is domestic,' he continued, 'but I love travelling, and my wife, consequently, should love travelling also.'

'Will you come away with me?' he said finally to her; but the Reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

'You have been trifling with me,' he cried. 'I am off to the Pyramids. Good-bye!' and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city. 'Where shall I put up?' he said; 'I hope the town has made preparations.'

Then he saw the statue on the tall column. 'I will put up there,' he cried. 'It is a fine position with plenty of fresh air.' So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

'I have a golden bedroom,' he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep. But just as he was putting his head under his wing a large drop of water fell on him. 'What a curious thing!' he cried, 'there is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful. The Reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness.'

Then another drop fell.

'What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?' he said; 'I must look for a good chimney-pot,' and he determined to fly away.

But before he had opened his wings, a third drop fell, and he looked up, and saw—Ah! What did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.

'Who are you?' he said.

'I am the Happy Prince.'

'Why are you weeping then?' asked the Swallow. 'You have quite drenched me.'

‘When I was alive and had a human heart,’ answered the statue, ‘I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the day time I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot choose but weep.’

‘What, is he not solid gold?’ said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud.

‘Far away,’ continued the statue in a low musical voice, ‘far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman seated at a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen’s

maids-of-honour to wear at the next Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move.

‘I am waited for in Egypt,’ said the Swallow. ‘My friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to the large lotus-flowers. Soon they will be going to sleep in the tomb of the great King. The King is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow linen, and embalmed with spices. Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade, and his hands are like withered leaves.’

‘Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, said the Prince, ‘will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty, and the mother so sad.’

‘I don’t think I like boys,’ answered the Swallow. ‘Last summer, when I was staying on the river, there were two rude boys, the miller’s sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows fly far too well for that, and besides, I come of a

family famous for its agility. But still, it was a mark of disrespect.'

But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little Swallow was sorry. 'It is very cold here,' he said; 'but I will stay with you for one night, and be your messenger.'

'Thank you, little Swallow,' said the Prince. So the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. 'How wonderful the stars are,' he said to her, 'and how wonderful is the power of love!'

'I hope my dress will be ready in time for the State-ball,' she answered; 'I have ordered passion-flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy.'

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging on the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor

house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy's forehead with his wings. 'How cool I feel,' said the boy, 'I must be getting better;' and he sank into a delicious slumber.

Then the Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done. 'It is curious,' he remarked, 'but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold.'

'That is because you have done a good action,' said the Prince. And the little Swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.

When day broke he flew down to the river and had a bath. 'What a remarkable phenomenon,' said the Professor of Orinthology as he was passing over the bridge. 'A Swallow in winter!' And he wrote a long letter about it to the local newspaper. Everyone quoted it; it was full of so many words that they could not understand.

'To-night I go to Egypt,' said the Swallow, and he was in high spirits at the prospect. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long

time on top of the church steeple. Wherever he went the Sparrows chirruped, and said to each other, 'What a distinguished stranger!' So he enjoyed himself very much.

When the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince. 'Have you any commissions for Egypt?' he cried. 'I am just starting.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'will you not stay with me one night longer?'

'I am waited for in Egypt,' answered the Swallow. 'To-morrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. The river-horse couches there among the bulrushes, and on a great granite throne sits the God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'far away across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. His hair is

brown and crisp, and his lips are red as a pomegranate, and he has large and dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre, but he is too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the grate, and hunger has made him faint.'

'I will wait with you one night longer,' said the Swallow, who really had a good heart. 'Shall I take him another ruby?'

'Alas! I have no ruby now,' said the Prince; 'my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India a thousand years ago. Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweller, and buy food and firewood, and finish his play.'

'Dear Prince,' said the Swallow, 'I cannot do that;' and he began to weep.

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'do as I command you.'

So the Swallow plucked out the Prince's eye, and flew away to the student's garret. It was easy enough to get in, as there was a hole in the roof. Through this he darted, and came into the room. The young man had his head buried in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of the bird's

wings, and when he looked up he found the beautiful sapphire lying on the withered violets.

‘I am beginning to be appreciated,’ he cried; ‘this is from some great admirer. Now I can finish my play,’ and he looked quite happy.

The next day the Swallow flew down to the harbour. He sat on the mast of a large vessel and watched the sailors hauling big chests out of the hold with ropes. ‘Heave a-hoy!’ they shouted as each chest came up. ‘I am going to Egypt!’ cried the Swallow, but nobody minded, and when the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

‘I am come to bid you good-bye,’ he cried.

‘Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,’ said the Prince, ‘will you not stay with me one night longer?’

‘It is winter,’ answered the Swallow, ‘and the chill snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun is warm on the green palm-trees, and the crocodiles lie in the mud and look lazily about them. My companions are building a nest in the Temple of Baalbec, and the pink and white doves are watching them, and cooing to each other. Dear Prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back

two beautiful jewels in place of those you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose, and the sapphire shall be as blue as the great sea.'

'In the square below,' said the Happy Prince, 'there stands a little match-girl. She has let her matches fall in the gutter, and they are all spoiled. Her father will beat her if she does not bring home some money, and she is crying. She has no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. Pluck out my other eye, and give it to her, and her father will not beat her.'

'I will stay with you one night longer,' said the Swallow, 'but I cannot pluck out your eyes. You would be quite blind then.'

'Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'do as I command you.'

So he plucked out the Prince's other eye, and darted down with it. He swooped past the match-girl, and slipped the jewel into the palm of her hand. 'What a lovely bit of glass,' cried the little girl; and she ran home, laughing.

Then the Swallow came back to the Prince. 'You are blind now,' he said, 'so I will stay with you always.'

'No, little Swallow,' said the poor Prince, 'you must go away to Egypt.'

'I will stay with you always,' said the Swallow, and he slept at the Prince's feet.

All the next day he sat on the Prince's shoulder, and told him stories of what he had seen in strange lands. He told him of the red ibises who stand in long rows on the banks of the Nile, and catch gold fish in their beaks; of the Sphinx who is as old as the world itself, and lives in the desert, and knows everything; of the merchants who walk slowly by the side of their camels, and carry amber beads in their hands; of the King of the Mountain of the Moon who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm-tree, and has twenty priests to feed it with honey-cakes; and of the pygmies who sail over a big lake on large flat leaves, and are always at war with the butterflies.

'Dear little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'you tell me of marvellous things, but more marvellous than anything is the suffering of men and of women. There is no Mystery so great as Misery. Fly over my city, little Swallow, and tell me what you see there.'

So the Swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the

gates. He flew into dark lanes, and saw the white faces of starving children looking out listlessly at the black streets. Under the archway of a bridge two little boys were lying in one another's arms to try and keep themselves warm. 'How hungry we are!' they said. 'You must not lie here,' shouted the Watchman, and they wandered out into the rain.

Then he flew back and told the Prince what he had seen.

'I am covered with fine gold,' said the Prince. 'You must take it off, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor; the living always think that gold can make them happy.'

Leaf after leaf of the fine gold the Swallow picked off, till the Happy Prince looked quite dull and grey. Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children's faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the street.

'We have bread now!' they cried.

Then the snow came, and after the snow came the frost. The streets looked as if they were made of silver, they were so bright and glistening. Long icicles like crystal daggers hung down from the eaves of the houses. Everybody went

about in furs, and the little boys wore scarlet caps and skated on the ice.

The poor little Swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the Prince; he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker's door when the baker was not looking, and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings.

But at last he knew that he was going to die. He had just strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more. 'Good-bye, dear Prince!' he murmured, 'will you let me kiss your hand?'

'I am glad that you are going to Egypt at last, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'you have stayed too long here; but you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you.'

'It is not to Egypt that I am going,' said the Swallow. 'I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?'

And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue, as if something had broken. The fact is that the leaden heart had snapped right in two. It certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the Mayor was walking in the square below in company with the

Town Councillors. As they passed the column he looked up at the statue: 'Dear me! how shabby the Happy Prince looks!' he said.

'How shabby indeed!' cried the Town Councillors, who always agreed with the Mayor, and they went up to look at it.

'The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer,' said the Mayor. 'In fact, he is little better than a beggar!'

'Little better than a beggar,' said the Town Councillors.

'And here is actually a dead bird at his feet!' continued the Mayor. 'We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to die here.' And the Town Clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. 'As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful,' said the Art Professor at the University.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the Mayor held a meeting of the Corporation to decide what was to be done with the metal. 'We must have another statue, of course,' he said, 'and it shall be a statue of myself.'

'Of myself,' said each of the Town Councilors, and they quarrelled. When I last heard of them, they were quarrelling still.

'What a strange thing,' said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. 'This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away.' So they threw it on a dust heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

'Bring me the two most precious things in the city,' said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

'You have rightly chosen,' said God, 'for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me.'

THE LAST LESSON

ALPHONSE DAUDET

I started for school very late that morning. I was in great fear of a scolding, especially because Mr. Hamel had said that he would question us on participles. I did not know the first word about them. For a moment I thought of running away and spending the day out of doors. It was so warm, so bright! The birds were chirping at the edge of the woods. In the open field back of the sawmill the Prussian soldiers were drilling. It was all much more tempting than the rule for participles. But I had the strength to resist, and hurried off to school.

When I passed the town hall there was a crowd in front of the bulletin-board. For the last two years all our bad news had come from there—the lost battles, the draft, the orders of the commanding officer. I thought to myself without stopping:

“What can be the matter now?”

Then, as I hurried by as fast as I could go, the blacksmith, Wachter, who was there, with

his apprentice, reading the bulletin, called after me:

“Do’t go so fast, you’ll get to your school in plenty of time!”

I thought he was making fun of me. I reached Mr. Hamel’s little garden all out of breath.

Usually, when school began, there was a great bustle which could be heard out in the street. One could hear the opening and closing of desks, lessons repeated very loud, with out hands over our ears to understand better, and the teacher’s great ruler rapping on the table. But now it was all so still! I had counted on the confusion to get to my desk without being seen. But, of course, that day everything had to be as quiet as Sunday morning. Through the window I saw my classmates, already in their places. Mr. Hamel was walking up and down with his terrible iron ruler under his arm. I had to open the door and go in before everybody. You can imagine how I blushed and how frightened I was.

But nothing happened. Mr. Hamel saw me and said very kindly:

“Go to your place quickly, little Franz. We were beginning without you.”

I jumped over the bench and sat down at my desk. Not till then, when I had got a little over

my fear, did I see that our teacher had on his beautiful green coat, his frilled shirt, and the little black silk cap, all embroidered, that he never wore except on inspection and prize days. Besides, the whole school seemed so strange and solemn. But the thing that surprised me most was to see, on the back benches that were always empty, the village people sitting quietly like ourselves. There was old Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, the former mayor, the former postmaster, and several others besides. Everybody looked sad. Hauser had brought an old primer thumbed at the edges, and he held it open on his knees with his great spectacles lying across the pages.

While I was wondering about it all, Mr. Hamel mounted his chair. In the same grave and gentle tone which he had used to me, he said:

“My children, this is the last lesson I shall give you. The order has come from Berlin to teach only German in the Schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The new master comes to-morrow. This is your last French lesson. I want you to be very attentive.”

What a thunderclap these words were to me!

Oh, the wretches; that was what they had put up at the Town-hall!

My last French lesson! Why, I hardly knew how to write! I should never learn any more! I must stop there, then! Oh, how sorry I was for not learning my lessons, for seeking birds' eggs, or going sliding on the Saar! My books, that had seemed such a load a while ago, so heavy to carry, my grammar, and my history of the saints, were old friends now that I couldn't give up. And Mr. Hamel, too; the idea that he was going away, that I should never see him again, made me forget all about his ruler and how cranky he was.

Poor man! It was in honour of this last lesson that he had put on his fine Sunday clothes. Now I understood why the old men of the village were sitting there in the back of the room. It was because they were sorry, too, that they had not gone to school more. It was their way of thinking our master for his forty years of faithful service and of showing their respect for the country that was theirs no more.

While I was thinking of all this, I heard my name called. It was my turn to recite. What would I not have given to be able to say that dreadful rule for the participle all through, very

loud and clear, and without one mistake? But I got mixed up on the first words and stood there, holding on to my desk. My heart was beating. I heard Mr. Hamel say to me:

“I won’t scold you, little Franz; you must feel bad enough. See how it is! Every day we have said to ourselves, ‘Bah!’ I’ve plenty of time. I’ll learn it to-morrow.’ And now you see where we’ve come out. Ah, that’s the great trouble with Alsace; she puts off learning till to-morrow. Now those fellows out there will have the right to say to you: ‘How is it? you pretend to be Frenchmen, and yet you can neither speak nor write your own language?’ But you are not the worst, poor little Franz. We’ve all a great deal to blame ourselves for.

“Your parents were not anxious enough to have you learn. They preferred to put you to work on a farm or at the mills so as to have a little more money. And I? I’ve been to blame also. Have I not often sent you to water my flowers instead of learning your lessons? And when I wanted to go fishing, did I not just give you a holiday?”

Then, from one thing to another, Mr. Hamel went on to talk of the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful language in the

world. We must guard it among us and never forget it. When people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language, it is as if they had the key to their prison. Then he opened a grammar and read us our lesson. I was amazed to see how well I understood it. And he said seemed so easy, so easy. May be I had never listened so carefully, and that he had never explained everything with so much patience. It seemed almost as if the poor man wanted to give us all he knew before going away. He wanted to put it all into our heads at one stroke.

After the grammar, we had a lesson in writing. That day Mr. Hamel had new copies for us, written in a beautiful round hand: France, Alsace, France, Alsace. They looked like little flags floating, everywhere in the school-room, hung from the rod at the top of our desks. You ought to have seen how every one set to work, and how quiet it was. The only sound was the scratching of the pens over the paper. Once some beetles flew in, but nobody paid any attention to them. On the roof the pigeons cooed very low. I thought to myself:

“Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons?”

Whenever I looked up from my writing I saw Mr. Hamel sitting motionless in his chair and gazing first at one thing, then at another. It seemed he wanted to fix in his mind just how everything looked in their little school-room. Fancy! For forty years he had been there in the same place, with his garden outside the window and his class in front of him, just like that. Only the desks and benches had been worn smooth. How it must have broken his heart to leave it all, poor man; to hear his sister moving about in the room above, packing their trunks! For they must leave the country next day.

But he had the courage to hear every lesson to the very last. After the writing, we had a lesson in history. Down there at the back of the room old Hauser had put on his spectacles, and, holding his primer in both hands, spelled the letters with us. You could see that he, too, was crying. His voice trembled with emotion. It was so funny to hear him that we all wanted to laugh and cry. Ah, how well I remembered it, that last lesson!

All at once the church-clock struck twelve. At the same moment the trumpets of the Prussians, returning from drill, sounded under our

windows. Mr. Hamel stood up, very pale, in his chair. I never saw him look so tall.

“My friends,” said he, “I—I” But something choked him. He could not go on.

Then he turned to the blackboard. He took a piece of chalk, and bearing on with all his might, he wrote as large as he could:

“Long live France!”

Then he bent and leaned his head against the wall. Without a word, he made a gesture to us with his hand:

“School is dismissed—you may go.”

THE LITTLE MERMAID

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

Far out at sea, the water is as blue as the blue sky, as clear as the purest crystal. But it is very deep—so deep, indeed, that no rope can measure it. It is there that the sea-folk dwell.

Nor must it be imagined that there is nothing but a bare, white, sandy ground below. No, indeed! The soil produces the most curious trees and flowers, whose leaves and stems are so flexible that the slightest motion of the waters seems to move them as if they were living creatures. Fishes, great and small, glide through the branches as birds fly through trees here upon earth. In the deepest spot of all stands the sea-king's palace; its walls are of shells, and its tall, pointed windows of the clearest amber, while the roof is made of red shells, that open and shut according to the tide. And beautiful they look; for in each shell lies a pearl, any one of which would be worthy to be placed in a queen's crown.

The sea-king had been a widower for many years, so his aged mother kept house for him. She was a very wise woman. But she was

extremely proud of her noble birth. She wore twelve Oyster-shells on her tail while other well-born persons only wore six. In all other respects she was a very praiseworthy sort of person. She took lot of care of the little princesses her grand-daughters. They were six pretty children; but the youngest was the prettiest of all. Her skin was as clear and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest sea. But she had no feet any more than the others, and her body ended in a fish's tail.

They were free to play about all day long in the vast rooms of the palace below water, where live flowers grew upon the walls. The large amber windows were opened, when the fishes would swim inwards to them just as the Swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows. Only the fishes swam right up to the princesses, and ate out of their hands.

In front of the palace was a large garden with bright red and dark-blue trees. The fruit glittered like gold, and the blossoms were like fiery sparks. The ground was covered with the most delicate sand, but blue as the flames of sulphur.

Each of the little princesses had plot of ground in the garden where she might dig and

plant as she pleased. One sowed her flowers so as to come up in the shape of a whale. Another preferred the figure of a little mermaid. But the youngest planted hers in a circle to imitate the sun, and chose flowers as red as the sun appeared to her. She was a strange child, both silent and thoughtful. While her sisters were delighted with all the strange things that they obtained through the wrecks of various ships, she had never claimed anything—with the exception of the red flowers that resembled the sun above—but a pretty statute, representing a handsome youth, and cut out of pure white marble, that had sunk to the bottom of the sea when a ship ran aground. She planted a bright red weeping-willow beside the statute; and when the tree grew up, its fresh boughs hung over it nearly down to the blue sands.

There was nothing she delighted in so much as to hear about the upper world. She was always asking her grandmother to tell her all she knew about ships, towns, people and animals. What struck her as most beautiful was, that the flowers of the earth should have perfumes, which they do not have below the sea; that the forests were green; and that the fishes amongst the trees should sing so loud and so exquisitely that it must be a joy to hear them. It was the little birds

that her grandmother called fishes, or else her young listeners would not have understood her, for they had never seen birds.

'When you have reached your fifteenth year,' said the grandfather, 'you shall have leave to rise up out of the sea, and sit on the rocks in the moonlight and look at the large ships sailing past. And then you will see both forests and towns.'

In the following year one of the sisters would reach the age of fifteen. But as all the rest were each a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before it would be her turn to come up from the bottom of the ocean and see what our world is like. However, the eldest promised to tell the others what she saw, and what struck her as most beautiful on the first day.

But none of them longed for her turn to come so intensely as the youngest. She had to wait the longest. Many a night did she stand at the open window, and gaze upwards through the dark blue water, and watch the fishes as they lashed the sea with fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars, that appeared indeed rather pale, though much larger, seen through the water, than they do to us. If something resembl

ing a black cloud glided between the stars and herself, she knew that it was either a whale swimming overhead, or a ship full of human beings, none of whom probably dreamed that a lovely little mermaid was standing below.

The eldest princess was now fifteen, and was allowed to rise up to the surface of the sea.

On her return she had a great deal to relate. But the most delightful thing of all, she said, was to lie upon a sand-bank in the calm sea, and to gaze upon the large city near the coast where lights were shining like hundreds of stars. And the youngest sister longed after all these things, just because she could not approach them.

Oh, how attentively she listened to her elder sister! And later in the evening, when she stood at the open window, and gazed up through the dark blue water, how she thought about the large city with its lights shining and twinkling.

In the following year, the second sister obtained leave to rise up to the surface of the water and swim about at her pleasure. She went up just at sunset, which appeared to her the finest sight of all. She said that the whole sky appeared like gold; and as to the clouds, their beauty was beyond all description.

The year after, the third sister went up. She was the boldest of them all; so she swam up a river that fell into the sea. She saw beautiful green hills covered with trees; she heard the birds singing, and the sun felt so warm that she was frequently obliged to dive down under the water to cool her burning face. In a small creek she met with a whole troop of little human children. They were naked, and dabbling about in the water. She wanted to play with them, but they ran away in great alarm; and there came a little black animal (she meant a dog, only she had never seen one before), who barked at her so loudly that she was frightened. But she would never forget the beautiful forests, the green hills, or the pretty children who were able to swim in the water although they had no fish's tails.

The fourth sister was less daring. She remained in the midst of the sea, and said that it was most beautiful at that point, because from there one could see for miles around, and the sky looked like glass above one's head. She had seen ships, but only at a distance.

It was now the fifth sister's turn. Her birthday was in the winter; therefore she saw what the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea looked quite green, and huge ice-

bergs were floating about; each looked like a pearl, she said, only larger than the houses built by human beings. They were of the oddest shapes, and glittered like diamonds. She had placed herself upon the largest of them, and let the wind play with her long hair. But towards evening the sky became overcast, it thundered and lightened, while the dark sea lifted up the huge icebergs on high, so that they were illuminated by the red flashes of the lightning.

The first time that each of the sisters had successively risen to the surface of the water, they had been enchanted by the novelty and beauty of all they saw. But being now grown up, and at liberty to go above as often as they pleased, they had grown indifferent to such excursions. They longed to come back into the water, and at the end of a month they had all declared that it was far more beautiful down below, and that it was a pleasure to stay at home.

It frequently happened in the evening that the five sisters would join hands and rise up to the surface of the water all in a row. They had beautiful voices, far finer than any human beings. When a storm was coming on, and they thought that a ship might sink, they swam before the vessel, and sang most sweetly of the delights

to be found beneath the water, begging the sailors not to be afraid of coming down below. But the sailors could not understand what they said, and mistook their words for the howling of the wind.

When the sisters rose up arm-in-arm through the water, the youngest would stand alone, looking after them and felt ready to cry; only mermaids have no tears, and therefore suffer all the more.

‘How I wish I were fifteen!’ said she, ‘I am sure I shall love the world above, and the beings that live in it’.

At last she reached the age of fifteen.

‘Well! now you are grown up,’ said her grandmother, the widow to the late king. ‘So let me dress you like your sisters.’ And she placed in her hair a wreath of white lilies, every leaf of which was half a pearl; and the old dame ordered eight large oyster-shells to be fastened to the princess’ tail, to show her high rank.

‘But they hurt me so,’ said the little mermaid.

‘Pride must suffer pain,’ said the old lady.

‘Farewell’ cried she, rising as lightly as a bubble to the surface of the water.

The sun had just sunk as she raised her head above the waves, but the clouds were still pink, and fringed with gold. The atmosphere was mild and cool, and the sea quite calm. A large ship with three masts was lying on its surface; only a single sail was hoisted, for not a breeze was stirring. There were musical instruments playing, and voices singing; and when the evening grew darker, hundreds of gay-coloured lanterns were lighted, which looked like the flags streaming through the air. The little mermaid swam close to the cabin window, and as often as the water lifted her up, she peeped in through the panes, and saw a number of well-dressed persons. But the handsomest of all was the prince, with large black eyes. He could not be above sixteen, and it was his birthday that was being celebrated with such magnificence. The sailors danced upon deck. When the young prince came up above, a hundred rockets were set off, that lit the air till it was as bright as day, and so frightened the little mermaid that she dived under the water. But she soon popped out her head once more, when all the stars in heaven seemed to be falling down upon her. She had never seen such fireworks before.

It was late. Still the little mermaid could not take her eyes off the ship or the handsome

prince. The lanterns were now extinguished, the rockets ceased to be let off, and no more cannons were fired. Still she sat rocking up and down in the water, so as to peep into the cabin. But now the ship began to move faster, the sails were unfurled one after another, the waves ran higher, heavy clouds flitted across the sky, and flashes of lightning were seen in the distance. A tremendous storm seemed coming on. The large ship kept pitching to and fro in its rapid course across the raging sea. The waves rose, like so many gigantic black mountains, threatening to roll over the ship. The ship kept creaking and creaking, the thick planks gave way beneath the repeated lashings of the waves. A leak was sprung, the mast was broken right in two like a reed, and the vessel drooped on one side, while the water filled in. The little mermaid now saw that the crew were in danger, and she was herself obliged to take care not to be hurt by the beams and planks belonging to the ship. For one moment it was so pitch dark that she could see nothing; but when a flash of lightning illuminated the sky, she looked for the young prince, whom she perceived sinking into the water, just as the ship broke into pieces. She was quite pleased at the thought of his coming down to her. Then she reflected that human beings can-

not live in water, and that he would be dead by the time he reached her father's castle. But die he must not. So she swam towards him through the planks and beams that were thrown on the waves forgetting that they might crush her to atoms. She dived deep under the water, and then, rising again between the waves, she managed at length to reach the young prince who was scarcely able to fight any longer with the stormy sea. His arms and legs began to feel powerless, his beautiful eyes were closed, and he would have died had not the little mermaid come to his help. She held his head above the water, and then let the waves carry them.

Towards morning the storm died away. The sun rose red and beaming from the water, and seemed to infuse life into the prince's cheeks; but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high, polished forehead, and stroked back his wet hair. She thought he was like the marble statue in her garden.

They now came in sight of land; and she saw high, blue mountains, on the tops of which the snow looked dazzling white. Below, near the coast, were beautiful green forests, and in front stood a building. Oranges grew in the garden, and tall palm-trees stood in front of the door. The sea formed a small bay at this spot,

and the water, though very deep, was quite calm. So she swam with the handsome prince towards the rock, where the delicate white sands had formed a heap, and here she laid him down.

The bells now pealed from the large white building, and a number of girls came into the garden. The little mermaid then swam farther away, and hid herself behind some high stones that rose out of the water; and covering herself with foam, so that no one could see her, she watched whether any one came to the poor prince's assistance.

It was not long before a young maiden approached the spot where he was lying. She appeared frightened at first, but it was only for a moment, and then she fetched a number of persons. The mermaid saw that the prince came to life again, and that he smiled on all those around him. But he did not send her a smile, neither did he know she had saved him. So she felt quite sad. When he was led into the large building, she dived back into the water with a heavy heart, and returned to her father's castle.

Silent and thoughtful as she had always been, she now grew still more so. Her sisters inquired what she had seen the first time she went above, but she did not tell them.

Many an evening, and many a morning, did she rise up to the spot where she had left the prince. She saw the snow melt away from the summits of the high mountains. But she did not see the prince, and each time she returned home more sorrowful than ever. Her only consolation was to sit in her little garden, and to fling her arm round the beautiful marble statue that was like the prince.

At length she could resist no longer, and opened her heart to one of her sisters, from whom all the others immediately learnt her secret. They told it to no one else except to a couple of other mermaids. One of these happened to know who the prince was. She, too, had seen the dance on shipboard, and informed them where he came, and where his kingdom lay.

'Come, little sister!' said the other princesses; and, holding their hands they rose up in a long row, out of the sea, at the spot where they knew the prince's palace stood.

This was built of bright yellow, shining stone with a broad flight of marble steps, the last of which reached down into the sea. Magnificent golden cupolas rose above the roof, and marble statues, closely resembling life, were placed between the pillars. One could see, through the transparent panes of the large windows, right

into the magnificent rooms, fitted up with costly silk curtain and splendid hangings, and ornamented with large pictures on all the walls; so that it was a pleasure to look at them.

Now that she knew where he lived, she spent many an evening, and many a night, on the neighbouring water. She swam much nearer the shore than any of the others had dared to do. She even went up the narrow canal, under the handsome marble balcony, that threw its long shadow over the water. Here she would sit, and gaze at the young prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonshine.

Many an evening did she see him sailing in his pretty boat, adorned with flags, and enjoying music. Then she would listen from amongst the green reeds.

Many a night, too, when fishermen were spreading their nets by torchlight, she heard them speaking highly of the young prince; and she rejoiced that she had saved his life, when he was tossed about, half dead, on the waves.

She soon grew to be more and more fond of human beings, and to long more and more to be able to walk about amongst them. For their world appeared to her far larger and more

beautiful than her own. They could fly across the sea upon ships, and scale mountains that towered above the clouds, while the lands they possessed—their fields and their forests—stretched away far beyond the reach of her sight.

There was such a deal that she wanted to learn, but her sisters were not able to answer all her questions. Therefore she asked her old grandmother, who was well acquainted with the upper, world, which she called, very correctly, the lands above the sea.

‘If human beings do not get drowned,’ asked the little mermaid, ‘can they live for ever? Do not they die, as we do here in the sea?’

‘Yes,’ said the old lady, ‘they must die as well as we; and the term of their life is even shorter than ours. We can live to be three hundred years old; but when we cease to be here, we shall only be changed into foam, and are not even buried below among those we love. Our souls are not immortal. We shall never enter upon a new life. We are like the green reed that can never flourish again when it has once been cut through. Human beings, on the contrary, have a soul that lives eternally—yea, even after the body has been buried in the earth—and that rises up

through the clear, pure air, to the bright stars above! As we rise out of the water, to look at the haunts of men, so do they rise to unknown and favoured regions, that we shall never be privileged to see.'

'And why have we not an immortal soul?' asked the little mermaid, sorrowfully. 'I would willingly give all the hundreds of years I may have to live, to be a human being but for one day, and to have the hope of sharing in the joys of the heavenly world.'

'You must not think about that,' said the old dame. 'We feel we are much happier and better than the human race above.'

'So I shall die, and be driven about like foam on the sea, and cease to hear the music of the waves, and to see the beautiful flowers, and the red sun? Is there nothing I can do to obtain an immortal soul?'

'No,' said the old sea-queen; 'unless a human being loved you so dearly that you were more to him than either father or mother. If all his thoughts and his love were centred in you, and he allowed the priest to lay his right hand in yours, promising to be faithful to you here and hereafter: then would his soul glide into your body, and you would obtain a share in the happi-

ness awaiting human beings. He would give you a soul without forfeiting his own. But this will never happen! Your fish's tail, which is a beauty amongst us seafolk, is thought a deformity on earth, because they know no better,—it is necessary to have two stout props, that they call legs, in order to be beautiful!’

The little mermaid sighed as she cast a glance at her fish's tail.

‘Let us be merry,’ said the old dame; ‘let us jump and hop about during the three hundred years that we have to live—which is really quite enough. We shall then be all the more disposed to rest at a later period. Tonight we shall have a court ball.’

On these occasions there was a display of magnificence such as we never see upon earth. The walls and the ceiling of the large ballroom were of thick though transparent glass. Hundreds of colossal shells—some of a deep red, others as green as grass—were hung in rows on each side, and contained blue flames that illuminated the whole room, and shone through the walls, so that the sea was lighted all round. Countless fishes, great and small, were to be seen swimming past the glass walls, some of them in

scarlet scales, while others sparkled like gold or silver.

Through the ballroom flowed a wide stream, on whose surface the mermen and mermaids danced to their own sweet singing. Human beings have no such voices. The little mermaid sang the sweetest of them all, and the whole court applauded with their hands and tails; and for a moment she felt delighted, for she knew that she had the loveliest voice ever heard upon earth or upon the sea. But her thoughts soon turned once more to the upper world. For she could not long forget either the handsome prince, or her grief at not having an immortal soul like his. She therefore stole out of her father's palace, where all within was song and festivity, and sat down sadly in her own little garden. Here she heard a bugle sounding through the water.

'Now,' thought she, 'he is surely sailing about up above; he who fills all my thoughts, and to whose hands I would entrust the happiness of my existence. I will dare everything to win him, and to obtain an immortal soul. While my sisters are dancing in my father's castle, I will go to the sea-witch, who has always, frightened me so far. But now, perhaps, she can advise and help me.'

The little mermaid then left her garden, and went to the rushing pool, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never gone that way before. Neither flowers nor sea-grass grew there; and nothing but bare, gray, sandy ground led to the pool. Even here, during a good part of the way, there was no other road than across a sheet of warm, bubbling dirty mud. At the back of this lay her house, in the midst of a most strange forest: its trees and bushes were half animal, half plant—they looked like hundred-headed serpents growing out of the ground. The branches were long, slimy arms, with fingers like worms, and they could move every joint from the root to the tip. They laid fast hold of whatever they could snatch from the sea, and never let to go again. The little mermaid was so frightened at the sight of them that her heart beat with fear, and she was about to turn back. But then she thought of the prince, and of the soul that human beings possessed, and she took courage. She knotted up her long, flowing hair, that the plants might not seize hold of her, and crossing her hands over her bosom, she moved along, as a fish shoots through the water. She saw how each of them held what it had seized, with hundreds of little arms, as strong as iron clasps. Human beings, who had died at sea, and had

sunk below, looked like white skeletons in the arms of these plants.

She now approached a vast swamp in the forest where large, fat water-snakes were swimming: In the midst of this loathsome spot stood a house built of the bones of ship-wrecked human beings, and within sat the sea-witch, feeding a toad from her mouth, just as people amongst us give a little bird a lump of sugar to eat. She called the nasty fat water-snakes her little chicks, and let them creep all over her bosom.

‘I know what you want!’ said the sea-witch. ‘It is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, as it will plunge you into misfortune, my fair princess. You want to be rid of your fish’s tail, and to have a couple of props like those human beings have to walk about upon. So that the young prince may fall in love with you, and that you may obtain his hand and an immortal soul into the bargain!’ And then the old witch laughed so loud and so repulsively that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground, where they lay wriggling about. ‘You come just at the nick of time,’ added the witch, ‘for to-morrow, by sunrise, I should no longer be able to help you till another year had flown past. I will prepare

you a potion; and you must swim ashore with it to-morrow, before sunrise, and then sit down and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrivel up into what human beings call neat legs. But mind, it will hurt you as much as if a sharp sword were thrust through you. Everybody that sees you will say you are the most beautiful mortal ever seen. No dancer will move so lightly as you,, but every step you take will be like treading upon such sharp knives that you would think your blood must flow. If you choose to put up with sufferings like these, I have the power to help you.'

'I do,' said the little mermaid, in a trembling voice, as she thought of the prince and of an immortal soul.

'But bethink you well,' said the witch; 'if once you obtain a human form, you can never be a mermaid again! You will never be able to dive down into the water to your sisters, or return to your father's palace. If you should fail in winning the prince's love to the degree of his forgetting both father and mother for your sake, and loving you with his whole soul, and bidding the priest join your hands in marriage, then you will never obtain an immortal soul! And the very day after he will have married another,

your heart will break, and you will dissolve into the foam on the waves.

‘I am resolved,’ said the little mermaid, who had turned as pale as death.

‘But you must pay me my fees,’ said the witch, ‘and it is no small thing I require. You have the loveliest voice of all the inhabitants of the deep, and you depend upon its tones to charm him into loving you. Now, you must give me this beautiful voice. I choose to have the best of all you possess in exchange for my valuable potion. For I must mix my own blood with it, that it may prove as sharp as a two-edged sword.’

‘But if you take away my voice,’ said the little mermaid, ‘what have I left?’

‘Your lovely form,’ said the witch; ‘your aerial step, and your expressive eyes—with these you surely can win a man’s heart. Well? Has your courage melted away? Come! put out your little tongue, and let me cut it off for my fee, and you shall have the valuable potion.’

‘So be it,’ said the little mermaid; and the witch put her cauldron on the fire to prepare the potion.

‘Cleanliness is a virtue!’ said she, scouring the cauldron with the snakes that she had tied

into a knot, after which she picked her own breast and let her black blood trickle down into the vessel. The steam rose up in such fanciful shapes, that no one could have looked at them without a shudder. The witch kept flinging fresh materials into the cauldron every moment, and when it began to simmer it was like the wailings of a crocodile. At length the potion was ready, and it looked like the purest spring water.

‘Here it is,’ said the witch, cutting off the little mermaid’s tongue; so now she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak.

She saw her father’s palace—she knew the whole family were asleep within, but she did not dare to go and seek them, now that she was dumb and was about to leave them for ever. Her heart seemed ready to burst with anguish. She stole into the garden and plucked a flower from each of her sisters’ flower-beds, kissed her hand a thousand times to the palace, and then rose up through the blue waters.

The sun had not yet risen when she saw the prince’s castle, and reached the magnificent marble steps. The moon shone brightly. The little mermaid drank the sharp and burning potion, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword

was run through her delicate frame. She fainted away, and remained lifeless. When the sun rose over the sea, she awoke, and felt a sharp pang; but just before her stood the handsome young prince. He gazed at her so intently with his coal-black eyes that she cast hers to the ground. Now she saw that her fish's tail had disappeared, and that she had a pair of the neatest little white legs that a maiden could desire. The prince inquired who she was, and how she had come there. But she could only look at him with her mild and sorrowful deep-blue eyes, for speak she could not. He then took her by the hand, and led her into the palace. Every step she took was, as the witch had warned her it would be, like treading on the points of needles and sharp knives. She bore it willingly; and, hand in hand with the prince, she glided in the palace.

She was now dressed in costly robes of silk and muslin. She was the most beautiful of all the inmates of the palace, but she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak. Handsome female slaves, attired in silk and gold, came and sang before the prince and his royal parents. One of them happened to sing more beautifully than all the others. The prince clapped his hands and smiled. This made the little mermaid sad.

She knew that she herself had sung much more exquisitely, and thought: 'Oh, did he but know that to be near him, I sacrificed my voice to all eternity!'

The female slaves now performed a variety of elegant dances to the sound of the most delightful music. The little mermaid then raised her beautiful white arms, stood on the tops of her toes, and floated across the floor in such a way as no one had ever danced before. Every motion revealed some fresh beauty, and her eyes appealed still more directly to the heart than the singing of the slaves had done.

Everybody was enchanted, but most of all the prince. She danced on and on, though every time her foot touched the floor she felt as if she were treading on sharp knives. The prince declared that he would never part with her, and she obtained leave to sleep on a velvet cushion before his door.

He had her dressed in male attire that she might accompany him on horseback. They then rode together through the perfumed forests, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the little birds sang amongst the cool leaves. She climbed up mountains by the prince's side; and though her tender feet bled so that others

saw it, she only laughed at her sufferings, and followed him.

At night, when others slept throughout the prince's palace, she would go and sit on the broad marble steps, for it cooled her burning feet to bathe them in the sea-water. Then she thought of those below the deep.

One night her sisters rose up arm-in-arm, and sang so mournfully as they glided over the waters! She then made them a sign, when they recognised her, and told her how deeply she had saddened them all. After that they visited her every night; and once she saw at a great distance her aged grandmother, who had not come up above the surface of the sea for many years. They stretched out their arms to her, but they and the sea-king with his crown on his head did not go so near the shore as her sisters. Each day she grew to love the prince more fondly, and he loved her just as one loves a dear, good child. But as to choosing her for his queen, such an idea never entered his head. Yet, unless she became his wife, she would not obtain an immortal soul, and would melt to foam on the morrow of his wedding another.

‘Don’t you love me the best of all?’ The little mermaid’s eyes seemed to ask, when he embraced her, and kissed her fair forehead.

‘Yes, I love you best,’ said the prince, ‘for you have the best heart of any. You are the most devoted to me, and you resemble a young maiden whom I once saw, but whom I shall never meet again. I was on board a ship that sank; the waves cast me near a holy temple, where several young maids were performing Divine service. The youngest of them found me on the shore and saved my life. I saw her only twice. She would be the only one that I could love in this world. But your features are like her, and you have almost driven her image out of my soul. She belongs to the holy temple; and, therefore, my good star has sent you to me—and we will never part.’

‘Alas! he knows not that it was I who saved his life!’ thought the little mermaid. ‘I bore him across the sea to the wood where stands the holy temple. I sat beneath the foam to watch whether any human beings came to help him. I saw the pretty girl whom he loves better than he does me.’ And the mermaid fetched a deep sigh; for tears she had none to shed. ‘He says the maiden belongs to the holy temple, and she will, there-

fore, never return to the world. They will not meet again, while I am by his side and see him every day. I will take care of him, and love him, and sacrifice my life to him.'

But now came a talk of the prince being about to marry, and to obtain for his wife the beautiful daughter of a neighbouring king. That was why he was fitting out such a magnificent vessel. The prince was travelling ostensibly on a mere visit to his neighbour's estates, but, in reality, to see the king's daughter. He was to be accompanied by a numerous retinue. The little mermaid shook her head and smiled. She knew the prince's thoughts better than the others did. 'I must travel,' he had said to her. 'I must see this beautiful princess, because my parents require it of me. But they will not force me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her. She will not resemble the beautiful maid in the temple whom you are like. If I were compelled to choose a bride, it should sooner be you, my dumb foundling, with those expressive eyes of yours.' And he kissed her rosy mouth, and played with her long hair, and rested his head against her heart, which beat high with hopes of human joy and of an immortal soul.

'You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child, are you?' said he, as they stood on the

magnificent vessel that was to carry them to the neighbouring king's dominions. And he talked to her about tempests and calm, of the singular fishes to be found in the deep sea, and of the wonderful things the divers saw below. She smiled, for she knew, better than any one else, what was in the sea below.

During the moonlit night, when all were asleep on board, not even excepting the helmsman, she sat on deck, and gazed through the clear waters, and fancied she saw her father's palace. High above it stood her aged grandmother, with her silver crown on her head, looking up intently. Then her sisters rose up to the surface, and gazed at her mournfully and wrung their white hands. She made a sign to them, smiled, and would have told them that she was happy and well off. But the cabin-boy approached, and the sisters dived beneath the waves.

Next, morning, the ship came into port at the neighbouring king's splendid capital. The bells were all set a-ringing, trumpets sounded from high turrets. Soldiers, with flying colours and shining bayonets, stood ready to welcome the stranger. Every day brought some fresh entertainment. Balls and feasts succeeded each other. But the princess was not yet there; for she had

been brought up, people said, in a far-distant, holy temple, where she had acquired all manner of royal virtues. At last she came.

The little mermaid was curious to judge of her beauty. She was obliged to acknowledge to herself that she had never seen a lovelier face. Her skin was delicate and transparent and beneath her long, dark lashes sparkled a pair of sincere, dark-blue eyes.

‘It is you!’ cried the prince—‘you who saved me, when I lay like a lifeless corpse upon the shore!’ And he folded his blushing bride in his arms. Oh, I am too happy!’ said he to the little mermaid: ‘my fondest dream has come to pass. You will rejoice at my happiness, for you wish me better than any of them.’ And the little mermaid kissed his hand, and felt already as if her heart was about to break. His wedding-morning would bring her death, and she would be then changed to foam upon the sea.

All the church-bells were ringing. Perfumed oil was burning in costly silver lamps on all the altars. The priests were saying their prayers; while the bride and bridegroom joined their hands, and received the bishop’s blessing. The little mermaid, dressed in silk and gold, walked behind the bride. Her ears did not hear the cere-

mony; she thought of the approaching gloom of death, and of all she had lost in this world.

That same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board the ship. The cannons were roaring, the banners were streaming, and a costly tent of gold and purple, lined with beautiful cushions, had been prepared on deck for the reception of the bridal pair.

The vessel then set sail, with a favourable wind, and glided smoothly along the calm sea.

When it grew dark, a number of lamps were lighted, and the crew danced merrily on deck. The little mermaid could not help remembering her first visit to the earth, when she witnessed similar festivities and magnificence; and she twirled round in the dance, half poised in the air, like a swallow. All present cheered her for never had she danced so enchantingly before. Her tender feet felt the sharp pangs of knives. But she heeded it not, for a sharper pang had shot through her heart. She knew this was the last evening she should ever be able to see him for whom she had left her relations and her home, sacrificed her beautiful voice, and daily suffered most excruciating pains. It was the last night on which she might breathe the same air as he, and gaze on the deep sea and the

starry sky. An eternal night, now awaited her. For she had no soul, and could never now obtain one. Yet all was joy and gaiety on board till long past mid-night. She laughed and danced, though the thoughts of death were in her heart. The prince kissed his beautiful bride, and she played with his black locks; and then they went, arm-in-arm to rest beneath the splendid tent.

All was now quiet on board. The steersman only was sitting at the helm. The little mermaid leaned her white arms on the edge of the vessel, and looked towards the east for the first blush of morning. The very first sunbeam, she knew, must kill her. She then saw her sisters rising out of the sea. They were as pale as herself, and their long and beautiful locks were no longer streaming to the winds, for they had been cut off.

‘We gave them to the witch,’ said they, ‘to obtain help, that you might not die to-night. She gave us a knife in exchange—and a sharp one it is, as you may see. Now, before sunrise, you must plunge it into the prince’s heart. When his warm blood shall sprinkle your feet, they will again close up into a fish’s tail, and you will be a mermaid once more. You can come down to us, and live out your three hundred

years, before you turn into salt foam. Haste, then! He or you must die before sunrise! Our old grandmother has fretted till her white hair was fallen off, as ours has fallen under the witch's scissors. Haste, then! Do you not see those red streaks in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and then you must die!' And they then fetched a deep, deep sigh, as they sank down into the waves.

The little mermaid lifted the scarlet curtain of the tent, and beheld the fair bride resting her head on the prince's breast. She bent down and kissed his beautiful forehead, then looked up at the heavens where the rosy dawn grew brighter and brighter. She gazed on the sharp knife, and again turned her eyes towards the prince who was fast asleep. The mermaid's fingers clutched the knife—but in another moment she hurled the blade far away into the waves. They gleamed red where it fell, as though drops of blood were gurgling up from the water. She gave the prince one last, dying look, and then jumped overboard, and felt her body dissolving into foam.

The sun now rose out of the sea; its beams threw a kindly warmth upon the cold foam, and the little mermaid did not experience the pangs of death. She saw the bright sun, and above

were floating hundreds of transparent, beautiful creatures. She could still catch a glimpse of the ship's white sails, and of the red clouds in the sky, across the swarms of these lovely beings. Their language was melody but too ethereal to be heard by human ears, just as no human eye can discern their forms. Though without wings, their lightness raises them in the air. The little mermaid saw that she had a body like theirs, that kept rising higher and higher from out the foam.

'Where am I?' asked she, and her voice sounded like that of her companions, so ethereal, that no earthly music could give a proper idea of its sweetness.

'Amongst the daughters of the air' answered they. 'A mermaid has not an immortal soul, and cannot obtain one, unless she wins the love of some human being. But the daughters of the air, although not possessing an immortal soul by nature, can obtain one by their good deeds. We fly to warm countries, and fan the burning atmosphere, laden with disease, that destroys the sons of man. We diffuse the perfume of flowers through the air to heal and to refresh. When we have striven for three hundred years to do all the good in our power, we then obtain an

immortal soul. We share in the eternal happiness of the human race. You, poor little mermaid! have striven with your whole heart like ourselves. You have suffered and endured, and have raised yourself into an aerial spirit. Now your own good works may obtain you an immortal soul after the lapse of three hundred years.'

And the little mermaid lifted her brightening eyes to the sun, and for the first time she felt them filled with tears. All was now astir in the ship. She could see the prince and his beautiful bride looking for her, and then gazing sorrowfully at the pearly foam, as though they knew that she had cast herself into the waves. She kissed the bride's forehead, and fanned the prince, unseen by either of them. Then she mounted together with the other children of the air, on the rosy cloud that was sailing through the atmosphere.

'Thus shall we glide into the kingdom of heaven, after the lapse of three hundred years,' said she.

'We may reach it sooner,' whispered one of the daughters of the air. 'We enter unseen the dwellings of man, and for each day on which we have met with a good child, who is the joy of

his parents, and deserving of their love, the Almighty shortens the time of our trial. The child little thinks, when we fly through the room, and smile for joy at such a discovery, that a year is deducted from the three hundred we have to live. But when we see an ill-behaved or naughty child, we, shed tears of sorrow, and every tear adds a day to the time of our probation.'

THE FAMOUS ANIMAL MUSICIANS

An ass had carried sacks to the mill for his master for many long years. He felt his strength fail at last, so that he could no longer work for his living. His master thought of getting rid of his old servant, that he might save the expense of his food. But the ass discovered his intentions and determined to run away.

So he took the road to the town, where he had often heard the street band playing, and he thought he could be as musical as they were.

He had not travelled far when he saw a hound lying on the ground and gasping for breath, as if he were tired of running.

“Why are you panting so, friend?” asked the ass.

“Ah,” he replied, “now that I am old, and get each day weaker and weaker, I can no more go to the hunt. My master has ordered me to be killed so I have run away. But how I am to earn my living I don’t know.”

“Will you go with me?” said the ass. “Do you know, I am going to try my fortune as a

street musician in the town. I think you and I could easily earn a living by music. I can play the flute, and you can beat the drum."

The dog was quite contented. and so they both walked on together.

Not long after they saw a cat sitting in the road with a face as dismal as three days of rainy weather.

"Now, whatever has come across you, old whiskers?" asked the ass.

"How can one be merry when one is waiting for death?" said the cat. "Now I am getting old and my teeth are become stumps, I cannot catch mice. I like to lie behind the stove and sleep. But I found they were going to drown me. So I ran away as fast as I could. Now what am I to do?"

"Go with us to the town," said the ass. "You are accustomed to perform night music, I know; so you can easily become a street musician in the town."

"With all my heart," said the cat. So he walked on with them.

After travelling some little distance the three fugitives came to a farmyard, and on the gate stood a cock screaming with all his might.

"Why are you standing there on the gate and screaming so?" said the ass.

"I will tell you," replied the cock. "I have worked for the family for many years. But they have no pity. I heard the cook say that there is company coming on Sunday, and she shall make the soup out of me. So this evening my head will be cut off. Therefore I shall scream at the top of my voice as long as I can."

"Listen, Red Comb," said the ass; "would you like to run away with us? We are going to the town and you will find something better there than to be made into soup. You have a fine voice, and we are all musical by nature."

The cock readily agreed to this proposal, and they all four went away together.

They could not, however, reach the town in one day. Evening came on just as they entered a wood, so they decided to stay all night.

The ass and the dog laid themselves under a large tree, but the cat made himself comfortable on the branches. The cock flew to the summit of the tree, where he felt himself quite safe.

Before they slept, the cock, who from his high position could see to all points of the compass, discovered in the distance a tiny spark burning.

He called his comrades, and told them he was convinced that they were not far from a house in which a light was shining.

"Then," said the ass, "We must get up and go on to this light, for there would be some shelter for us." And the hound said he should be glad of a little piece of meat, or a couple of bones if he could get nothing else.

So they were very soon on their way to the place where the light shone. It grew larger and brighter as they approached, till they saw that it came from the window of a robber's cave. The ass, who was the tallest, went near and looked in.

"What is to be seen, old gray horse?" said the cock.

"What do I see?" answered the ass; "why, a table laid out with plenty to eat and drink, and robbers sitting at it and enjoying themselves."

"That ought to be our supper," said the cock.

"Yes, yes," the ass replied; "if we were only inside."

Then the animals consulted together as to what they had better do to drive the robbers away. At last they fixed upon a plan.

The ass was to stand on his hind legs and

place his fore feet on the window sill, and the dog to stand on his back. The cat was then to climb on the dog, and above them all, the cock promised to fly and perch on the cat's head.

As soon as this was accomplished, at a signal given, they all began to perform their music together. The donkey brayed, the hound barked, the cat mewed, and the cock crowed with such a tremendous force that the window rattled.

The robbers, hearing such a horrible outcry above them, thought it could only be caused by supernatural beings. They fled in great terror to the wood behind the house. Then our four comrades rushed in. They placed themselves near or upon the table, and took whatever was before them, which the robbers had left, and ate as if they had been hungry for a month.

When the four musicians had finished they put out the light, and each sought a sleeping place most easy and suitable to his nature and habits. The ass laid himself down at full length in the yard, the dog crouched behind the door. The cat rolled herself upon the hearth among the warm ashes, while the cock perched on the beam in the roof. They were all so tired with their long journey that they were soon fast asleep.

About midnight, one of the robbers, who was watching from a distance, saw that the light was out and all quiet. He told their chief, who said:

“I do not think there has been any cause for fear, after all.”

Then he called one of their number and sent him to the house to see if it was safe to return.

The messenger, finding everything still went into the kitchen to strike a light. He saw the glaring, fiery eyes of the cat looking like a live coal. So he held a match toward them that he might set fire to it. But puss, not understanding such sport, flew up, spit at him, scratched his face. This frightened him so terribly that he rushed to the door; but the dog, who lay there, sprang out upon him and bit him in the leg as he went by.

In the court he ran against the donkey, who gave him a kick with his hind foot, while the cock on the beam, aroused by the noise, became alive and brisk in a moment, and cried out as loudly as he could: “Cock-a-doodle-doo!”

Then ran the robber as fast as he could back to his chief.

“Ah, me!” he said, “in that house is a horrible witch, who flew at me and scratched me down

the face with her long fingers. Then by the door stood a man with a knife who stabbed me in the leg. And out in the court lay a black monster who struck me a violent blow with his wooden leg. While up in the roof sat the judge, who cried: 'Bring me the scoundrels here!' On that I made off as fast as possible."

From the moment that they heard this the robbers never again entered the house, but escaped as quickly from the place as they could; and the four musicians found themselves in such good quarters that they would not leave. and the last that was heard of the was that they intended to remain there.

(From Grimm's Fairy Tales)

THE BOTTLE IMP

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

There was a man who lived in Hawaii. I shall call him Keawe; for the truth is, he still lives, and his name must be kept secret. This man was poor, brave, and active. He could read and write like a schoolmaster; he was a first-rate mariner besides, and sailed for some time in the island steamers. At length it came in Keawe's mind to have a sight of the great world and foreign cities, and he shipped on a vessel bound to San Francisco.

This is a fine town with a fine harbour, and rich people. In particular, there is one hill which is covered with palaces. Upon this hill Keawe was one day taking a walk, with his pocket full of money, viewing the great houses upon either side with pleasure.

“What fine houses these are!” he was thinking, “and how happy must these people be who dwell in them, and take no care for the morrow!” The thought was in his mind when he came in front of a house that was smaller than some others, but all finished and beautified like

a toy. The steps of that house shone like silver, and the borders of the garden bloomed like garlands, and the windows were bright like diamonds. Keawe stopped and wondered at the excellence of all he saw. So stopping, he became aware of a man who looked forth upon him through a window. The man was elderly, with a bald head and a black beard. His face was heavy with sorrow, and he bitterly sighed. The truth of it is, that as Keawe looked in upon the man, and the man looked out upon Keawe, each envied the other.

All of a sudden the man smiled and nodded, and beckoned Keawe to enter, and met him at the door of the house.

"This is a fine house of mine," said the man, and bitterly sighed. "Would you not care to view the chambers?"

So he led Keawe all over it, from the cellar to the roof, and there was nothing there that was not perfect of its kind.

"Truly," said Keawe, "this is a beautiful house. If I lived in the like of it, I should be laughing all day long. How comes it, then, that you should be sighing?"

"There is no reason," said the man, "why you should not have a house in all points similar to

this, and finer, if you wish. You have some money, I suppose?"

"I have fifty dollars," said Keawe; "but a house like this will cost more than fifty dollars."

The man made a computation. "I am sorry you have no more," said he, "for it may bring you trouble in the future. But it shall be yours at fifty dollars."

"The house?" asked Keawe.

"No, not the house," replied the man; "but the bottle. For, I must tell you, although I appear to you so rich and fortunate, all my fortune, and this house itself and its garden came out of a bottle not much bigger than a pint. This is it."

He opened a lock-fast place, and took out a round-bellied bottle with a long neck; the glass of it was white like milk. Within sides something obscurely moved, like a shadow and a fire.

"This is the bottle," said the man. When Keawe laughed, "You do not believe me?" he added, "Try, then, for yourself. See if you can break it."

So Keawe took the bottle up and dashed it on the floor till he was weary. But it jumped on the floor like a child's ball, and was not injured.

"This is a strange thing," said Keawe, "For by the touch of it, as well as by the look, the bottle should be of glass."

"Of glass it is," replied the man, sighing more heavily than ever. "But the glass of it was tempered in the flames of hell. An imp lives in it, and that is the shadow we behold there moving. If any man buys this bottle the imp is at his command. All that he desires—love, fame, money, houses like this house, aye, or a city like this city—all are his at the word uttered. But once it is sold, the power goes and the protection."

"And yet you talk of selling it yourself?" Keawe said.

"I have all I wish, and I am growing elderly," replied the man. "There is one thing the imp cannot do—he cannot prolong life. Besides, it would not be fair to conceal from you, there is a drawback to the bottle. If a man dies before he sells it, he must burn in hell for ever."

"To be sure, that is a drawback and no mistake," cried Keawe, "I would not meddle with the think."

"Dear me, you must not run away with things," replied the man. "All you have to do

is to use the power of the imp in moderation, and then sell it to some one else, as I do to tell you, and finish your life in comfort."

"Well, I observe two things," said Keawe. "All the time you keep sighing like a maid in love, that is one; and, for the other, you sell this bottle very cheap."

"I have told you already why I sigh," said the man. "It is because I fear my health is breaking up; and to die and go to the devil is a pity for any one. As for why I sell so cheap, I must explain to you there is a peculiarity about the bottle. Long ago, when the devil brought it first upon earth, it was extremely expensive. It was sold first of all for many millions of dollars; but it cannot be sold at all, unless sold at a loss. If you sell it for as much as you paid for it, back it comes to you again like a homing pigeon. It follows that the price has kept falling in these centuries, and the bottle is now remarkably cheap. I bought it myself from one of my great neighbours on this hill, and the price I paid was only ninety dollars. I could sell it for as high as eighty-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents, but not a penny dearer, or back the think must come to me. Also remember it must be coin money that you sell it for."

"How am I to know that this is all true?" asked Keawe.

"Some of it you can try at once," replied the man. "Give me your fifty dollars, take the bottle, and wish your fifty dollars back into your pocket. If that does not happen, I pledge you my honour I will cry off the bargain and restore your money."

"You are not deceiving me?" said Keawe.

The man bound himself with a great oath.

"Well, I will risk that much," said Keawe, "for that can do no harm." He paid over his money to the man, and the man handed him the bottle.

"Imp of the bottle," said Keawe, "I want my fifty dollars back." And sure enough, he had scarce said the word before his pocket was as heavy as ever.

"To be sure this is a wonderful bottle" said Keawe.

"And now good-morning to you, my fine fellow, and the devil go with you for me," said the man.

"Hold on," said Keawe, "I don't want any more of this fun. Here, take your bottle back."

“You have bought it for less than I paid for it,” replied the man, rubbing his hands. “It is yours now; and, for my part, I am only concerned to see the back of you.”

Now when Keawe was in the street, with the bottle under his arm, he began to think, “If all is true about this bottle, I may have made a losing bargain,” thought he, “But, perhaps the man was only fooling me.” The first thing he did was to count his money; the sum was exact—forty-nine dollars American money, and one Hawaiian piece. “That looks like the truth,” said Keawe. “Now I will try another part.”

The streets in that part of the city were as clean as a ship's decks, and though it was noon, there were no passengers. Keawe set the bottle in the gutter and walked away. Twice he looked back, and there was the milky round-behind bottle where he left it. A third time he looked back, and turned a corner. But he had scarce done so, when something knocked upon his elbow, and behold! it was the long neck sticking up; and as for the round belly, it was jammed into the pocket of his coat.

“And that looks like the truth,” said Keawe.

He went back on board his ship. Now Keawe had a mate on board whose name was Lopaka.

"What ails you that you stare like this?" said Lopaka.

They were alone in the ship's forecastle, and Keawe bound him to secrecy and told all.

"This is a very strange affair," said Lopaka; "and I fear you will be in trouble about this bottle. But there is one point very clear—that you are sure of the trouble, and you had better have the profit in the bargain. Make up your mind what you want with it. Give the order, and if it is done as you desire, I will buy the bottle myself. For I have an idea of my own to get a schooner, and go trading through the islands."

"That is not my idea," said Keawe. "I want to have a beautiful house and garden on the Kona Coast where I was born, the sun shining in at the door, flowers in the garden, glass in the windows, pictures on the walls, and fine carpets, and to live there without care and make merry with my friends and relatives."

"Well," said Lopaka, "let us carry it back with us to Hawaii. If all comes true as you suppose, I will buy the bottle, as I said, and ask for a schooner."

Upon that they were agreed, and it was not long before the ship returned to Honolulu.

carrying Keawe and Lopaka, and the bottle. They were scarce come ashore when they met a friend upon the beach, who began at once to condole with Keawe.

"I do not know what I am to be condoled about," said Keawe.

"Is it possible you have not heard," said the friend, "your uncle—that good old man—is dead, and your cousin—that beautiful boy—was drowned at sea?"

Keawe was filled with sorrow and beginning to weep and to lament, he forgot about the bottle. But Lopaka was thinking to himself and presently, when Keawe's grief was a little lessened, he said, "I have been thinking. Had not your uncle lands in Hawaii, in the district of Kau?"

"No," said Keawe, "not in Kau. They are on the mountain side—a little way south of Hookena."

"These lands will now be yours?" asked Lopaka.

"And so they will," says Keawe, and began again to lament for his relatives.

"No," said Lopaka, "do not lament at present. I have a thought in my mind. How if this

should be the doing of the bottle? For here is the place ready for your house."

"If this be so," cried Keawe, "it is a very ill way to serve me by killing my relatives. But it may be, indeed. For it was in just such a place that I saw the house with my mind's eye."

"The house, however, is not yet built," said Lopaka.

"No, nor like to be!" said Keawe. "Though my uncle has some coffee and bananas, it will not be more than will keep me in comfort. The rest of that land is the black lava."

Now when they came to the lawyer, it appeared Keawe's uncle had grown monstrous rich in the last days and there was a fund of money.

"And here is the money for the house!" cried Lopaka.

"If you are thinking of a new house," said the Lawyer, "here is the card of a new architect of whom they tell me great things."

"Better and better!" cried Lopaka, "Here is all made plain for us. Let us continue to obey orders."

So they went to the architect, and he had drawings of houses on his table.

"You want something out of the way," said the architect. "How do you like this?" and he handed a drawing to Keawe.

Now, when Keawe set eyes on the drawing, he cried out aloud, for it was the picture of his thought exactly drawn.

"I am in for this house," thought he. "Little as I like the way it comes to me, I am in for it now, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he told the architect all that he wished, and how he would have that house furnished, and about the pictures on the walls and the knick-knacks on the table. Then he asked the man plainly for how much he would undertake the whole affairs.

The architect put many questions, and took his pen and made a calculation. When he had done he named the very sum that Keawe had inherited.

Lopaka and Keawe looked at one another and nodded.

"It is quite clear," thought Keawe, "that I am to have this house. It comes from the devil, and I fear I will get little good by that. Of one thing I am sure, I will make no more wishes

as long as I have this bottle. But with the house I am saddled, and I may as well take the good along with the evil."

So he made his terms with the architect, and they signed a paper; and Keawe and Lopaka took ship again and sailed to Australia. They decided that they should not interfere at all but leave the architect and the bottle imp to build and to adorn that house at their own pleasure.

The voyage was a good voyage, only all the time Keawe was holding in his breath. He had sworn he would utter no more wishes, and take no more favour from the devil. The time was up when they got back. The architect told them that the house was ready, and Keawe and Lopaka went to view the house, and see if all had been done fitly accordingly to the thought that was in Keawe's mind.

When they had viewed all, Keawe and Lopaka sat on the porch.

"Well," asked Lopaka, "is it all as you designed?"

"Words cannot utter it," said Keawe, "It is better than I dreamed, and I am sick with satisfaction."

"There is but one thing to consider," said Lopaka, "all this may be quite natural, and the bottle imp have nothing whatever to say to it. If I were to buy the bottle, and got no schooner after all, I should have put my hand in the fire for nothing. I gave you my word, I know. Yet I think you would not grudge me one more proof."

"I have sworn I would take no more favours," said Keawe. "I have gone already deep enough."

"This is no favour I am thinking of," replied Lopaka. "It is only to see the imp himself. There is nothing to be gained by that, and so nothing to be ashamed of. If I once saw him, I should be sure of the whole matter. So indulge me so far, and let me see the imp; and, after that, here is the money in my hand, and I will buy it."

"There is only one thing I am afraid of," said Keawe. "The imp may be very ugly to view, and if you once set eyes upon him you might be very undesirous to buy the bottle."

"I am a man of my word," said Lopaka. "And here is the money betwixt us."

"Very well," replied Keawe, "I have a curiosity myself. So come, let us have one look at you, Mr. Imp."

Now as soon as that was said, the imp looked out of the bottle, and in again, swift as lizard. There sat Keawe and Lopaka turned to stone. The night had quite come, before either found a thought to say or voice to say it with. Then Lopaka pushed the money over and took the bottle.

"I am a man of my word," said he, "and had need to be so, or I would not touch this bottle with my foot. Well, I shall get my schooner and a doller or two for my pocket; and then I will be rid of this devil as fast as I can. For to tell you the plain truth, the look of him has cast me down."

So Lopaka went down the mountain; and Keawe stood in his front balcony, and all the time he trembled and clasped his hands; and prayed for his friend, and gave glory to God that he himself was escaped out of that trouble.

But the next day came very brightly, and that new house of his was so delightful to behold that he forgot his terrors. One day followed another and Keawe dwelt there in perpetual joy.

So time went by, until one day Keawe went upon a visit as far as Kai Kua to certain of his friends. There he was well feasted; and left as soon as he could the next morning, and rode hard, for he was impatient to behold his beautiful house. A little beyond Honaunau, looking far ahead, he became aware of a woman standing on the edge of the sea. She seemed a well-grown girl, and he thought no more of it. But when he came abreast of her he drew rein.

"I thought I knew everyone in this country," said he. "How comes it that I do not know you?"

"I am Kokua, daughter of Kiano," said the girl. "Who are you?"

"I will tell you who I am in a little while," said Keawe, dismounting from his horse, "but not now. Tell me, first of all, one thing: are you married?"

At this Kokua laughed out aloud. "It is you who ask questions," she said. "Are you married yourself?"

"Indeed, Kokua, I am not," replied Keawe, "and never thought to be until this hour. But if you want none of me, say so, and I will go on to my own place. If, however, you think me

no worse than any other young man, say so, too, and I will talk with the good man."

Kokua said never a word but she looked at the sea and laughed.

"Kokua," said Keawe, "if you say nothing. I will take that for the good answer. So let us be stepping to your father's door."

Now, when they had come to the door, Kiano came out on his verandah, and cried out and welcomed Keawe by name. At that the girl looked over, for the fame of the great house had come to her ears. To be sure, it was a great honour to have a house like that. All that evening they were very merry together; and the girl was as bold as brass under the eyes of her parents, and made a mock of Keawe, for she had a quick wit. The next day he had a word with Kiano, and found the girl alone.

"Kokua," said he, "you made a mock of me all the evening; and it is still time to bid me go. I would not tell you who I was, because I have so fine a house, and I feared you would think too much of that house and too little of the man who loves you. Now you know all, and if you wish to have seen the last of me, say so at once."

"No," said Kokua, but this time she did not laugh, nor did Keawe ask for more.

This was the wooing of Keawe. Keawe left Kokua; his horse flew up the path of the mountain, and the sound of the hoofs, and the sound of Keawe singing to himself for pleasure, could be heard all over the place. He came to the Bright House, and still he was singing.

"Here am I now upon my high place," he said to himself. "Life may be no better. For the first time I will light up the chambers, and bathe in my fine bath with the hot water, and sleep above in the bed of my bridal chamber."

So the Chinaman had word, that he must rise from sleep and light the furnaces. When the water began to be hot the Chinaman called his master: and Keawe went into the bathroom. The Chinaman heard him sing as he filled the marble basin; and heard him sing, as he undressed; until of a sudden, the song ceased.

Now, the truth of it was this: as Keawe undressed for his bath, he spied upon his flesh a patch like a patch of lichen on a rock, and it was then that he stopped singing. For he knew the likeness of that patch, and knew that he had leprosy.

A while he sat upon the edge of the bath, then sprang, with a cry and ran outside. To and fro,

to and fro, along the balcony, like one despairing, he walked.

Now you are to observe what sort of a man Keawe was, for he might have dwelt there in the Bright House for years, and no one been the wisher of his sickness. And again he might have wed Kokua even as he was; and so many would have done, because they have the souls of pigs. But Keawe loved the maid manfully, and he would do her no hurt and bring her in no danger.

A little beyond the midst of the night, there came in his mind the recollection of that bottle. He went round to the back porch, and called to memory the day when the devil had looked forth. At the thought ice ran in his veins.

"A dreadful thing is the bottle," thought Keawe, "and dreadful is the imp, and it is a dreadful thing to risk the flames of hell. But what other hope have I to cure my sickness or to wed Kokua?"

Thereupon he called to mind it was the next day that a ship went by on her return to Honolulu. "There must I go first," he thought, and see Lopaka. For the best hope that I have now is to find that same bottle I was so pleased to be rid of."

Never a wink could he sleep. The food stuck in his throat. About the time when the steamer would be coming, he rode down. So he came to Hookena, and there was all the country gathered for the steamer as usual. In the shed before the store they sat and jested and passed the news; but there was no manner of speech in Keawe's bosom.

Then the Hall came, and the whale-boat carried him on board.

Soon after darkness fell and the cabins were lit up, and the people sat and played at the cards. But Keawe walked the deck all night; and all the next day he was still pacing to and fro like a wild animal in a menagerie.

Towards evening they passed Diamond Head, and came to the pier of Honolulu. Keawe stepped out among the crowd and began to ask for **Lopaka**. It seemed he had become the owner of a schooner—none better in the islands—and was gone upon an adventure as far as Pola-Pola or Kihiki; so there was no help to be looked for from Lopaka. Keawe called to mind a friend of his, lawyer in the town (I must not tell his name), and inquired of him. They said he was grown suddenly rich, and had a fine new house upon Waikiki shore. This put a thought

in Keawe's head, and he called a hack and drove to the Lawyer's house.

The house was all brand new, and the trees in the garden no greater than walking sticks. The Lawyer, when he came, had the air of a man well pleased.

"What can I do to serve you?" said the lawyer.

"You are a friend of Lopaka's," replied Keawe. "He purchased from me a certain piece of goods that I thought you might enable me to trace."

The lawyer's face became very dark. "I do not profess to misunderstand you, Mr. Keawe," said he, "though this is an ugly business to be stirring in. You may be sure I know nothing, but yet I have a guess, and if you would apply in a certain quarter I think you might have news."

He named the name of a man, which, again, I had better not repeat. So it was for days Keawe went from one to another, finding everywhere new clothes and carriages, and fine new houses and men everywhere in great contentment, although, to be sure, when he hinted at his business their faces would cloud over.

"No doubt I am upon the track," thought Keawe. "These new clothes and carriages are all the gifts of the little imp, and these glad faces are the faces of men who have taken their profit and got rid of the accursed thing in safety. When I see pale cheeks and hear sighing, I shall know that I am near the bottle."

So it befell at last he was recommended to a Haole in Beritania Street. When he came to the door, about the hour of the evening meal, there were the usual marks of the new house, and the young garden, and the electric light shining in the windows. But when the owner came a shock of hope and fear ran through Keawe. For here was a young man, white as a corpse, and black about the eyes, the hair shedding from his head, and such a look in his countenance as a man may have when he is waiting for the gallows.

"Here it is, to be sure," thought Keawe, "I am come to buy the bottle," said he.

At the word, the young Haole of Beritania Street reeled agaisnt the wall.

"The bottle!" he gasped. "To buy the bottle!" Then he seemed to choke, and seizing Keawe by the arm, carried him into a room and poured out wine in two glasses.

“Here is my respect,” said Keawe. “Yes,” he added, “I am come to buy the bottle. What is the price by now?”

At that word the young man let his glass slip through his fingers, and looked upon Keawe like a ghost.

“The price,” says he; “the price! You do not know the price?”

“It is for that I am asking you,” returned Keawe. “But why are you so much concerned? Is there anything wrong about the price?”

“It has dropped a great deal in value since your time, Mr. Keawe,” said the young man, stammering.

“Well, well, I shall have the less to pay for it,” said Keawe. “How much did it cost you?”

The young man was as white as a sheet. “Two cents,” said he.

“What?” cried Keawe, “two cents? Why then, you can only sell it for one. And he who buys it —” The words died upon Keawe’s tongue. He who bought it could never sell it again. The bottle and the bottle imp must abide with him until he died, and when he died must carry him to the red end of hell.

The young man of Beritania Street fell upon his knees. "For God's sake, buy it!" he cried. "You can have all my fortune in the bargain. I was mad when I bought it at that price. I had embezzled money at my store. I was lost else. I must have gone to jail."

"Poor creature," said Keawe, "you would risk your soul upon so desperate an adventure to avoid the proper punishment of your own disgrace. You think I could hesitate with love in front of me. Give me the bottle, and the change which I make sure you have all ready. Here is a five-cent piece."

It was as Keawe supposed. The young man had the change ready in a drawer. The bottle changed hands, and Keawe's fingers were no sooner clasped upon the stalk than he had breathed his wish to be a clean man. And, sure enough, when he got home to his room, and stripped himself before a glass, his flesh was whole like an infant's. And here was the strange thing. Now he had but the one thought, that he was bound to the bottle imp for time and for eternity, and had no better hope but to be a cinder for ever in the flames of hell.

"But it is done now," he thought, "and once more let me take the good along with the evil."

So he returned to Hawaii by the first steamer, and as soon as it could be managed he was wedded to Kokua, and carried her up the mountain side to the Bright House.

Now it was so with these two, that when they were together Keawe's heart was stilled; but so soon as he was alone he fell into a brooding horror, and heard the flames crackle, and saw the red fire burn in the bottomless pit. The girl, indeed, had come to him wholly. Her heart leaped in her side at sight of him, her hand clung to his. She was pleasant in her nature. She had the good word always. Full of song she was, and went to and fro in the Bright House, the brightest thing in its three stories, carolling like the birds. And Keawe beheld and heard her with delight, and then he would shrink upon one side, and weep and groan to think of the price that he had paid for her.

There came a day when her feet began to be heavy and her songs more rare. Now it was not Keawe only that would weep apart. One day, coming softly through the house, he heard the sound of a child sobbing, and there was Kokua rolling her face upon the balcony floor, and weeping like the lost.

“You do well to weep in this house, Kokua,” he said. “And yet I would give the head off my body that you might have been happy.”

“Happy!” she cried. “Keawe, when you lived alone in your Bright House you were the word of the island for a happy man. Laughter and song were in your mouth, and your face was as bright as the sunrise. Then you wedded poor Kokua; and the good God knows what is amiss in her—but from that day you have not thought I was pretty, and I knew I loved him. smiled. Oh!” she cried, “what ails me? I What ails me, that I throw this cloud upon my husband?”

“Poor Kokua,” said Keawe. He sat down by her side. “Poor Kokua,” he said again. “My poor child—my pretty. And I had thought all all. Then, at least, you will pity poor Keawe. Then you will understand how much he loved this while to spare you! Well, you shall know you in the past—that he dared hell for your possession—and how much he loves you still, that he can yet call up a smile when he beholds you.”

“You have done this for me?” she cried. “Ah, well, then what do I care?” and she wept upon him.

"Ah, child!" said Keawe, "and yet, when I consider of the fire of hell, I care a good deal!"

"Never tell me," said she, "no man can be lost because he loved Kokua, and had no other fault. I tell you, Keawe, I shall save you with these hands or perish in your company. What! you loved me and gave your soul, and you think I will not die to save you in return?"

"Ah, my dear, you might die a hundred times, and what difference would that make?" he cried, "except to leave me lonely till the time comes for my damnation?"

"You know nothing," said she. "I was educated in a school in Honolulu; I am no common girl. And I tell you I shall save my lover. What is this you say about a cent? But all the world is not American. In England they have a piece they call a farthing, which is about half a cent. Ah! sorrow!" she cried, "that makes it scarcely better, for the buyer must be lost, and we shall find none so brave as my Keawe! Let us go to the French islands. Let us go to Tahiti, as fast as ships can bear us. There we have four centimes, three centimes, two centimes, one centime; four possible sales to come and go on!

and two of us to push the bargain. Come, my Keawe! and banish care. Kokua will save you."

"Gift of God!" he cried. "I cannot think that God will punish me for desiring aught so good. Be it as you will, then, take me where you please; I put my life and my salvation in your hands."

It was given out in the country they were gone pleasuring to the States. After a pleasant voyage they came to Papeete, a French island.

It was judged the most wise to hire a house, which they did accordingly, opposite the British Consul's to make a great parade of money, and themselves conspicuous with carriages and horses. This it was very easy to do, so long as they had the bottle in their possession. For Kokua was more bold than Keawe, and whenever she had a mind, called on the imp for twenty or a hundred dollars. At this rate she soon grew to be remarked in the town.

Now they began to push the sale of the bottle. It was not an easy subject to introduce. It was not easy to persuade people to buy for four centimes the spring of health and riches inexhaustible. It was necessary besides to explain the dangers of the bottle. Either people disbelieved

the whole thing and laughed, or they thought the more of the darker part, and drew away from Keawe and Kokua. So far from gaining ground, these two began to find they were avoided in the town.

“Heaven,” Kokua thought one night, “how careless have I been—how weak! It is he, not I, who stands in this eternal peril. It was he, not I, that took the curse upon his soul. It is for my sake, and for the love of a creature of so little worth and such poor help that he now beholds so close to him the flames of hell. Am I so dull of spirit that never till now I have surmised my duty? But now, at least, I take up my soul in both the hands of my affection. Now I say farewell to the white steps of heaven and the waiting faces of my friends. A love for a love! and let mine be equalled with Keawe’s! A soul for a soul, and be it mine to perish!”

Once when Keawe lay moaning under the bananas she took in her hands the change—the precious centimes they kept ever at their side—and went out. The town slept, and she knew not whither to turn till she heard one coughing in the shadow of the trees.

"Old man," said Kokua, "what do you here abroad in the cold night?"

The old man could scarce express himself for coughing but she made out that he was old and poor, and a stranger in the island.

"Will you do me a service?" said Kokua, "As one stranger to another, and as an old man to a young woman, will you help a daughter of Hawaii?"

"Sit down here," said Kokua, "and let me tell you a tale." She told him the story of Keawe from the beginning to the end.

"And now," said she, "I am his wife, whom he bought with his soul's welfare. And what should I do? If I went to him myself and offered to buy it, he would refuse. But if you go, he will sell it eagerly. I will await you here. You will buy it for four centimes, and I will buy it again for three. And the Lord strengthen a poor girl!"

"If you meant falsely," said the old man, "I think God would strike you dead."

"He would!" cried Kokua. "Be sure He would. I could not be so treacherous—God would not suffer it," said the old man.

Now, when Kokua stood alone in the street, her spirit died. She did not have strength to run away, and she trembled like an affrighted child.

She bought the cursed bottle, concealed it under her cloak, said farewell to the old man, and walked off along the avenue, she cared not whither. For all roads were now the same to her, and led equally to hell.

Near day she came to her mind again, and returned to the house. Keawe slumbered like a child. Kokua stood and gazed upon his face.

She lay down in the bed and her misery was so extreme that she fell in a deep slumber instantly.

Late in the morning her husband woke her and gave her the good news. It seemed he was silly with delight, for he paid no heed to her distress.

All the while Keawe was eating and talking, and planning the time of their return, and thanking her for saving him, and calling her the true helper after all. He laughed at the old man that was fool enough to buy that bottle.

Then he went out, and Kokua was alone.

What chance had she to sell that bottle at two centimes? None, she knew. And if she had any, here was her husband hurrying her away to a country where there was nothing lower than a cent.

By and by Keawe came back, and would have her take a drive.

"My husband! I am ill," she said. "I am out of heart. Excuse me, I can take no pleasure."

Then was Keawe very angry.

"This is your truth," cried he, "and this your affection! Your husband is just saved from eternal ruin, which he encountered for the love of you—and you can take no pleasure! Kokua! you have a disloyal heart."

He went forth again furious, and wandered in the town all day. He met friends, and drank with them. All the time Kokua was unhappy.

Now there was an old brutal Haole drinking with him, one that had been a sailor of a whaler—a runaway, a digger in gold mines, a convict in prisons. He had a low mind and foul mouth. He loved to drink and to see others drunken. He pressed the glass upon Keawe. Soon there was no more money in the company.

"Here, you!" said the boatswain, "you are rich, you have been always saying. You have a bottle or some foolishness."

"Yes," said Keawe, "I am rich; I will go back and get some money from my wife, who keeps it."

Accordingly Keawe bade the boatswain wait for him at the corner, and went to the door of his house. The night had come again. There was a light within, but never a sound: and Keawe crept about the corner, opened the back door softly, and looked in.

There was Kokua on the floor, the lamp at her side. Before her was a milk-white bottle, with a round belly and a long neck; and as she viewed it, Kokua wrung her hands.

A long time Keawe stood and looked in the doorway. His knees trembled, and the fumes of the wine departed from his head. Then he had another thought; and it was a strange one, that made his cheeks burn.

"I must make sure of this," thought he.

So he closed the door, and went softly round the corner again, and then came noisily in, as though he were but now returned. And, lo! by the time he opened the front door no bottle was

to be seen, Kokua sat in a chair and started up like one awakened out of sleep.

“I have been drinking all day and making merry,” said Keawe. “I have been with good companions, and now I only come back for money, and return to drink with them again.”

“It is what I feared,” he thought. “It is she who has bought it.”

And then he came to himself a little and said: “Kokua, I said to you today what ill became me. Now I return to the house of my jolly companions,” and at that he laughed a little quietly. “I will take more pleasure in the cup if you forgive me.”

She clasped his knees in a moment, she kissed his knees with flowing tears.

“Oh,” she cried. “I ask but a kind word!”

“Let us never think harshly of each other,” said Keawe, and was gone out of the house.

Now, the money that Keawe had taken was only some of that store of centime pieces they had laid in at their arrival. It was very sure he had no mind to be drinking. His wife had given her soul for him, now he must give his for hers. No other thought was in the world with him.

At the corner, there was the boatswain waiting.

"My wife has the bottle," said Keawe, "and, unless you help me to recover it, there can be no more money and no more liquor tonight."

"You do not mean to say you are serious about that bottle?" cried the boatswain.

"There is the lamp," said Keawe, "Do I look as if I was jesting?"

"That is so," said the boatswain. "You look as serious as a ghost."

"Well, then," said Keawe, "here are two centimes. You must go to my wife in the house, and offer her these for the bottle. Bring it to me here, and I will buy it back from you for one; for that is the law with this bottle that it must still be sold for a less sum. But whatever you do, never breathe a word to her that you have come from me."

"Mate! I wonder are you making a fool of me?" asked the boatswain.

"If you doubt me," added Keawe, "you can try. As soon as you are clear of the house, wish to have your pocket full of money, or a bottle of the best rum, or what you please, and you will see the virtue of the thing."

“Very well,” said the boatswain. “I will try; but if you are having your fun out of me, I will take my fun out of you with a box.”

So the whaler-man went up the avenue; and Keawe stood and waited.

It seemed a long time he had to wait before he heard a voice singing in the darkness of the avenue. He knew the voice to be the boatswain's; but it was strange how drunken it appeared upon a sudden.

Next, the man himself came stumbling into the light of the lamp. He had the devil's bottle buttoned to his coat; another bottle was in his hand; and even as he came in view he raised it to his mouth and drank.

“You have it,” said Keawe. “I see that.”

“Hands off!” cried the boatswain, jumping back.

“Take a step near me, and I'll smash your mouth. You thought you could make a cat's-paw of me, did you?”

“What do you mean?” cried Keawe.

“Mean?” cried the boatswain. “This is a pretty good bottle, this is; that's what I mean. How I got it for two centimes I can't make out; but I am sure you sha'nt have it for one.”

"You mean you won't sell it?" gasped Keawe.

"No, sir," cried the boatswain. "But I'll give you a drink of the rum, if you like."

"I tell you," said Keawe, "the man who has that bottle goes to hell."

"I reckon I'm going anyway," returned the sailor; "and this bottle's the best thing to go with I've found yet. No sir!" he cried again, "this is my bottle now, and you can go and fish for another."

"Can this be true?" Keawe cried. "For your own sake, I beseech you, sell it to me!"

"I don't value any of your talk," replied the boatswain. "You thought I was a fool. Now you see I'm not; and there's an end. If you won't have a swallow of the rum, I'll have one myself. Here's your health, and good-night to you!"

So off he went down the avenue towards town and there goes the bottle out of the story.

But Keawe ran to Kokua light as the wind; and great was their joy that night; and great, since then, has been the peace of all their days in the Bright House.

THREE SUNDAYS IN A WEEK

EDGAR ALLAN POE

"You hard-headed, obstinate, rusty, crusty, musty, old savage!" said I, in fancy, one afternoon, to my grand-uncle . . . shaking my first at him in imagination.

Only in imagination. The fact is, some trivial discrepancy did exist, just then, between what I said and what I had not the courage to say . . . between what I did and what I had half a mind to do.

The old porpoise, as I opened the drawing-room door, was sitting with his feet upon the mantelpiece, and a glass of port in his hand.

"My dear uncle," said I, closing the door gently, and approaching him with the blandest of similes, "You are always so very kind and considerate, and have shown your generosity in so many . . . so very many ways . . . that . . . that I feel I have only to suggest this little point to you once more to make sure of your full agreement."

"Hem!" said he, "good boy! go on!"

"I am sure, my dearest uncle (you stupid old

fool!., that you have no design really, seriously, to oppose my marriage with Kate. This is merely a joke of yours I know . . . ha! ha! ha! . . . how very pleasant you are at times."

"Ha! ha! ha!" said he, "curse you! yes"

"To be sure . . . of course! I knew you were jesting. Now, uncle, all that Kate and myself wish at present is that you would oblige us with your advice as . . . as regards the time . . . you know, uncle . . . in short, when will it be most convenient for yourself, that the wedding shall . . . shall . . . come off, you know?"

"Come off you scoundrel! . . . what do you mean by that? . . . Better wait till it goes on."

"Ha! ha! ha! . . . he he! he! . . . hi! hi! . . . ho! ho! ho! . . . hu! hu! he! . . . oh, that's good! . . . oh, that's capital . . . such a wit! But all we want just now, you know, uncle, is that you would indicate the time precisely."

"Ah! . . . precisely."

"Yes, uncle . . . that is, if it would be quite agreeable to yourself."

"Wouldn't it answer, Bobby, if I were to leave it at random . . . some time within a year or so, for example? . . . must I say precisely?"

"If you please' uncle . . . precisely."

"Well, then, Bobby, my boy . . . you're a fine fellow, aren't you? . . . since you will have the exact time I'll . . . why I'll oblige you for once."

"Hush, sir!" (Drowning my voice) . . . "I'll oblige you for once. You shall have my consent . . . and the plum, we mus'nt forget the plum . . . let me see! when shall it be? Today's Sunday . . . isn't it? Well, then, you shall be married precisely . . . precisely. now mind! . . . when three Sundays come together in a week . . . but not till then . . . you young scapegrace . . . not till then, if I die for it. You know me . . . I'm a man of my word . . . now be off!" Here he swallowed his bumper of port, while I rushed from the room in despair.

A very "fine old English gentleman," was my grand-uncle, but he had his weak points. He was a little, pursy, pompous, passionate semicircular somebody, with a red nose, a thick skull, a long purse, and a strong sense of his own importance. With the best heart in the world, he had earned for himself, among those who only knew him superficially, the character of an eccentric. To every request, a positive "No!" was his immediate answer; but in the end . . . in the

long, long end . . . there were exceedingly few requests which he refused. Against all attacks upon his purse he made the most sturdy defence; but the amount extorted from him, at last, was generally in direct ratio with the length of the siege and the stubbornness of the resistance. In charity no one gave more liberally or with a worse grace.

I had lived with the old gentleman all my life. My parents, in dying, had bequeathed me to him as a rich legacy. I believe the old villain loved me as his own child . . . nearly if not quite as well as he loved Kate . . . but it was a dog's existence that he led me, after all. From five to fifteen, he threatened me, hourly, with the House of Correction. From fifteen to twenty, not a day passed in which he did not promise to cut me off with a shilling. I was a sad dog. In Kate, however, I had a firm friend, and I knew it. She was good girl, and told me very sweetly that I might have her (plum and all) whenever I could badger my grand-uncle into the necessary consent. Poor girl . . . she was barely seventeen, and without this consent, her little amount in the funds was not to be had until five immeasurable summers had "dragged their slow length along." What, then, to do? At seventeen

or even at twenty-one, five years in prospect are very much the same as five hundred. In vain we besieged the old gentleman with importunities. In his heart he wished for nothing more ardently than our union. He had made up his mind to this all along. In fact, he would have given ten thousand pounds from his own pocket (Kate's plum was her own) if he could have invented anything like an excuse for complying with our very natural wishes. But then we had been so imprudent as to broach the subject ourselves. Not to oppose it under such circumstances, I sincerely believe, was not in his power.

I have said already that he had his weak points. But in speaking of these, I must not be understood as referring to his obstinacy, which was one of his strong points. He was very punctilious upon small points of honour, and after his own fashion, was a man of his words, beyond doubt. This was, in fact, one of his hobbies. The spirit of his vows he made no scruple of setting at naught, but the letter was a bond inviolable. Now it was this latter peculiarity in his disposition, of which Kate's ingenuity enables us one fine day, not long after our interview in the dining-room, to take a very unexpected advan-

tage. This I will sum up in a few words what constitutes the whole pith of the story.

It happened then . . . so the Fates ordered it . . . that among the naval acquaintances of my betrothed, were two gentlemen who had just set foot upon the shores of England, after a year's absence, each, in foreign travel. In company with these gentlemen, my cousin and I paid uncle a visit on the afternoon of Sunday, October the tenth . . . just three weeks after the memorable decision which had so cruelly defeated our hopes. For about half an hour the conversation ran upon ordinary topics. At last, we contrived, quite naturally, to give it the following turn:

Captain Pratt: "Well I have been absent just one year. Just one year today, as I live . . . let me see! yes! . . . this is October tenth. You remember, sir, I called this day year to bid you good-bye. And by the way, it does seem something like a coincidence . . . does it not . . . that our friend, Captain Smitherton, here, has been absent exactly a year also . . . a year today!"

Smitherton: "Yes! just one year to a fraction. You will remember, that I called with Captain Pratt on this very day, last year, to pay my parting respects."

Uncle: "Yes, yes, yes . . . I remember it very well . . . very queer indeed! Both of you gone just one year. A very strange coincidence indeed!"

Kate: "To be sure, papa, it is something strange; but then Captain Pratt and Captain Smitherton didn't go altogether the same route, and that makes a difference, you know."

Uncle: "I don't know any such thing you huzzy! How should I? I think it only makes the matter more remarkable . . . "

Kate: "Why, papa, Captain Pratt went round Cape Horn. and Captain Smitherton doubled the Cape of Good Hope."

Uncle: "Precisely! . . . the one went east and the other west, you jade, and they both have gone quite round the world."

Myself: "Captain Pratt, you must come and spend the evening with us tomorrow . . . you and Smitherton . . . you can tell us all about your voyage, and we'll have game of whist and . . . "

Pratt: "Whist, my dear fellow . . . you forget. Tomorrow will be Sunday. Some other evening . . . "

Kate: "Oh, no, fie! . . . Robert's not quite so bad as that Today's Sunday."

Uncle: "To be sure . . . to be sure!"

Pratt: "I beg both your pardon . . . but I can't be so much mistaken. I know tomorrow's Sunday because . . ."

Smitherton: (Much surprised.) "What are you all thinking about? Wasn't yesterday Sunday, I should like to know?"

All: "Yesterday, indeed! you are out!"

Uncle: "Today's Sunday, I say . . . don't I know?"

Pratt: "Oh no! . . . tomorrow's Sunday."

Smitherton: "You are all mad . . . every one of you. I am as positive that yesterday was Sunday as I am that I sit upon this chair."

Kate: (Jumping up eagerly.) "I see it . . . I see it all. Papa, this is a judgment upon you, about . . . about you know what. Let me alone, and I'll explain it all in a minute. It's very simple thing indeed. Captain Smitherton says that yesterday was Sunday: so it was; he is right. Cousin Bobby, and Papa and I say that today is Sunday: so it is; we are right. Captain Pratt maintains that tomorrow will be Sunday:

so it will; he is right, too. The fact is, we are all right and thus three Sundays have come together in a week."

Smitherton: (After a pause.) "By the by Pratt! Kate has us completely. What fools we two are! The earth, you know, is twenty-four thousand miles in circumference. Now this globe of the earth turns upon its own axis . . . revolves . . . spins round . . . these twenty-four thousand miles of extent, going from west to east, in precisely twenty-four hours. Do you undrestand, Sir? . . . "

Uncle: "To be sure . . . to be sure . . . "

Smitherton: "Well, sir; that is at the rate of one thousand miles per hour. Now suppose that I sail from this position a thousand miles east. Of course I anticipate the rising of the sun here at London by just one hour. I see the sun rise one hour before you do. Proceeding, in the same direction, yet another thousand miles, I anticipate the rising by two hours . . . another thousand, and I anticipate it by three hours, and so on, until I go entirely round the globe, and back to this spot, when, having gone twenty-four thousand miles east, I anticipate the rising of the London sun by no less than twenty-four hours; that is to say, I am a day in advance of

your time. Understand, eh!"

Uncle: "But . . . "

Smitherton: (Speaking very loud.) "Captain Pratt, on the contrary, when he had sailed a thousand miles west of this position, was an hour, and when he had sailed twenty-four thousand miles west, was twenty-four hours, or one day *behind* the time at London. Thus, with me, yesterday was Sunday . . . thus, with you, today is Sunday . . . and thus, with Pratt, to-morrow will be Sunday. And what is more, sir, it is positively clear that we are *all right*, for there can be no philosophical reason assigned why the idea of one of us should have prefererence over that of the other."

Uncle, "My eyes! . . . well, Kate . . . well, Bobby! . . . this is a judgment upon me, as you say. But I am a man of my word . . . mark that! you shall have her, boy. (Plum and all), when you please. Done up, by Jove! Three Sundays all in a row!"

NOTES

THE HAPPY PRINCE

Glossary

sapphires: precious stones, blue in colour.

crying for the moon: wanting something impossible.

muttered: grumbled.

charity children: orphans.

pinafors: a covering worn by children to protect their clothes from getting dirty.

frowned: looked angry.

reed: long grass that grows by the riverside. It grows in swampy-places.

ridiculous attachment: foolish love.

twittered: chirped; gossiped.

coquette: flirt.

curtsies: bows.

drenched one: made one quite wet.

Palace of Sans Souci: It is a French word which means 'without care'. The young prince lived in a palace which was a place without any care.

coarse: rough.

Seamstress: a woman who sews clothes with hands.

Passion flower: the name of a flower. It is supposed to resemble the crown worn by Christ.

embalmed: preserved; covered with.

agility: quick movement; capacity to move very quickly.

Ghetto: the area in a city where mostly the Jews

lived. Just as in modern America certain city areas are restricted for Negroes, in Europe the Jews were outcasts in almost the same way.

thimble: a small covering worn to protect the finger from being pricked by the needle. Mostly used by tailors and seamstresses while sewing.

Ornithology: The branch of Zoology which deals with birds, their nature and habits.

Second Cataract: A waterfall of the River Nile.

Memmon: A Trojan hero who was killed by Achilles of Greece. A statue in his memory was erected in Egypt near Thebes. This statue produced a musical sound every morning when the first ray of the sun fell on his lips.

beryl: a precious stone, pale-green in colour.

garret: a small room on the very top of a house.

the hold: the bottom portion of a ship which is used as a store.

Temple of Baalbec: Baalbec was an ancient city in Syria. Baal was one of the Syrian gods.

red ibises: a species of wading birds, closely related to the stork. They were worshipped by ancient Egyptians.

Sphinx: a fabled animal: it was said to have the head and face of a woman, the body of a lion, the tail of a serpent, the wings of a bird and human voice. It asked lonely travellers riddles, and when they could not answer, it would eat them.

Pygmy: a members of a race of men. They are very small in size.

Snapped: broken.

Idioms and Phrases.

Use the following phrases and idioms in your own sentences :

Cry for the moon.

All through.

Tire of ; tire by.

Put up ; put in ; put by ; put off.

look around.

filled with.

cannot choose but.

far too well.

in high spirits.

pluck out.

fall in, fall upon.

take off ; take away ; take in ; take upon.

Questions.

Answer the following :

1. Why is the story called ' the Happy Prince ' ?
2. Where did the Swallow spend the night ?
3. Why was the Prince weeping ?
4. What did the Prince tell the Swallow to do ?
5. Where did the Swallow carry the ruby ?
6. Why did the Prince feel sorry for the seamstress ?
7. What did the Swallow tell the Prince
8. What did the Swallow carry to the writer ?
9. What did the Swallow give to the match girl ?
10. Where was the Swallow going ?
11. Why did the Swallow not go to Egypt ?
12. Why did the Prince's heart break ?

13. Why did the angel bring the heart of the Prince and the dead body of the Swallow to God ?
14. What can you do to make men and women happy ?

THE LAST LESSON

Glossary.

participles a verb used as an adjective.

first word: Little Franz admits his ignorance.

Prussians: Germans.

bulletin-board: notice-board.

out of breath: because he had been running very fast.

bustle : noise.

three cornered hat : A hat brought into fashion by the famous French General Napoleon Bonaparte.

thumbed at the edges: A book bearing thumb marks. It shows the book had been used a great deal. Another expression for such a book is dog eared.

thunder clap : sudden bad news ; like a crash of thunder.

the Saar : a tributary of the Moselle, which flows along the Franco-German border.

cranky : eccentric.

loud and clear : loudly and clearly, without any hesitation or break. Franz could do this only if he knew the lesson well.

mixed up : confused.

enslaved : made slaves.

at one stroke : in a single moment.

broken his heart : made him very unhappy.

reproach : rebuke ; scold.

Idioms and Phrases.

Note the use of the following idioms and make similar sentences of your own:

I was *in great fear* of a scolding. (*in great fear*).

I did not know *the first word* about them, (*the first word*).

... hurried off to school. (*hurried off*).

You'll get to your school in *plenty of time*. (*plenty of time*).

I reached Mr. Hamel's garden *all out of breath*. (*out of breath*).

There was a *great bustle* (*great bustle*).

Hauser had brought an old primer *thumbed at the edges*. (*thumbed at*).

He had *put on* his fine clothes. (*put on*).

But I got *mixed up* on the first words. (*mixed up*).

When people are enslaved, *as long as* they hold fast to their language, it is as if they had the key to their prison. (*as long as; hold fast; the key to*).

How it must have broken his heart to leave it all. (*broken his heart*).

He had the courage to hear every lesson *to the very last*. (*to the very last*).

Questions.

Answer the following :

1. Why is the story called "the Last Lesson"?
2. Who was Mr. Hamel?
3. Where was the bulletin-board?
4. Why had a crowd collected in front of the bulletin-board?
5. What did Franz see in his class-room?
6. Why did the master not scold Franz?
7. What did Mr. Hamel tell the class?
8. Why is one's mother language a key to prison?
9. Did you like this story? why?

THE LITTLE MERMAID

Glossary.

crystal: glass.

dwell: live.

praiseworthy: worthy of praise, admirable.

amber: red.

aground: stranded; broken.

exquisitely: beautifully; perfectly.

longed for: wanted very much.

creek: a small inlet or bay of the sea, or the river.

daring: courageous; bold.

icebergs: huge pieces of ice, they are like floating islands or hills of ice moving in the sea.

oddest: strangest.

fringed: bordered.

take her eyes off: take her eyes away.

gigantic: huge.

lashings: beatings; rise and fall of the waves.

crew: sailors of the ship.

pealed: rang.

cupolas: Concave ceiling on top of the building like a dome.

tossed: thrown about.

acquainted with: familiar with.

haunts of men: places where men live.

hereafter: after this moment.

Sorceress: a witch; one who possesses super-natural powers.

midst: middle.

laid fast hold of: caught firmly.

potion: drink; a measure of medicine.

shrivel: shrink.

treading: walking.

resolved: determined.

deep: sea.

scouring: cleaning.

cauldron: a large kettle for boiling or heating liquids.

anguish: pain; suffering.

attired: dressed; clothed.

Divine Service: Prayers to God.

Good star: my good luck.

ostensibly: outwardly; for show.

foundling: orphan.

tempests: storms.

Balls: dance parties.

witnessed: saw.

excruciating: extremely painful.

fretted: worried.

discern: see; make out.

ethereal: heavenly.

strivens worked hard.

astir: movement.

Phrases and Idioms

Use the following phrases and idioms in your own sentences :

Far out.

Nothing but.

Keep house for.

Rise up.

long for.

Many a.

Twinkling of an eye.

In the midst of.

Fringed with.

Give way; give in; give out; give up.

Roll over.

Acquainted with.

Haunts of men.

Hard and fast.

Only one.

Cut off; cut in; cut away; cut up.

turn into; turn out; turn off; turn down.

Questions.

Answer the following :

1. Who was the Little Mermaid?
2. How many sisters had she?
3. Who looked after the sisters?
4. What kind of a palace did they live in?

5. When were the sisters allowed to go up to see the world?
6. What did the little Mermaid see on her first visit?
7. How did she save the Prince?
8. What price did she pay to acquire legs?
9. What was the condition for her winning an immortal soul?
10. How was she changed into a daughter of the air?
11. Why did she not kill the Prince?
12. Whom did the prince marry?
13. What do the daughters of the air do?
14. How is their time of trial shortened?

THE FAMOUS ANIMAL MUSICIANS

Glossary.

hound: hunting dog. A hound is specially bred and trained for hunting purposes.

panting: breathing fast.

dismal: sad looking.

old whiskers: (slang) a cat.

stumps: hard pieces of gums.

with all his might: with all his strength; forcefully.

Red Comb: A cock so called because of his comb or crest.

outcry: noises.

hearth: fire-place.

Phrases and Idioms

Use the following in sentences of your own:

With all the might.

On their way; in their way; out of their way.

Supernatural beings.

Put out; put in; put on; put off.

Full length.

As fast as.

Questions.

Answer the following :

1. Who were the four musicians?
2. What did the ass carry for his master?
3. Why did the master turn the dog out?
4. Why did the cat run away?
5. Why was the cock crowing?
6. Where did the animals plan to go?
7. How were they going to earn their living?
8. What did the cock see at night?
9. How did they drive the robbers away?
10. What happened when the thief returned to the house?

THE BOTTLE IMP

Glossary.

mariner: sailor.

at length: at last.

beautified: made beautiful.

beckoned: called.

from the cellar to the roof: from top to bottom;

every nook and corner of the house.

computation: calculation.

obscurely: not clearly visible: darkly.

tempered: heated and purified.

drawback: disadvantage: handicap.

meddle with: interfere with.

homing pigeon: the trained pigeons which carried messages always returned back home from where they started.

dearer: more expensive.

cry off the bargain: cancel the sale.

restore: *return*: make good the loss.

scarce: hardly.

hold on: wait a moment.

fooling me: making a fool of me.

ails you: troubles you.

bound him to secrecy: Swore him not to reveal the secret.

schooner: a sail boat.

make merry: enjoy.

mind's eye: in imagination.

out of the way: out of ordinary.

knick-knacks: things of decoration in a house.

saddled: burdened.

gave you my word: gave you my promise.

indulge me: satisfy me.

betwixt us: between us.

turned to stone: motionless; lifeless.

Perpetual joy: continuous happiness and peace.

abreast: side by side.

if you want none of me: if you do not like me.

made mock of Keawe: made fun of Keawe.

(Kokua laughs at Keawe.)

to see the last of me: if you don't want to see me again.

until of a sudden: all of a sudden.

even as he was: i.e. with the sickness. Even though he had the disease he could have still married Kokua.

ice ran in his veins: his blood froze.

no matter of speech in Keawe's bosom: Keawe did not feel like joining to the gossip or talking with the people.

menagerie: a place for keeping wild animals for exhibition.

hack: carriage driven by a horse.

black about the eyes: dark circles under the eyes, indicating worry and lack of sleep.

countenance: face: facial appearance.

embezzled: cheated: took money by fraud.

stalk: neck of the bottle.

stripped himself: took off his clothes: completely naked.

cinder: ashes.

Keawe's heart was stilled: Keawe's heart was at peace. He was not restless.

carolling: singing.

throw this cloud upon my husband: make my husband so sad.

conspicuous: talked about.

peril: danger.

he paid no heed: he paid no attention.

out of heart: out of sorts; not in a mood.

went forth: went out.

a convict: One who has been sentenced to a term in prison.

foul mouth: abusive or vulgar language.

ill became me: did not befit me; not proper for me to say.

take more pleasure in the cup: to drink more wine.

jesting: joking.

mate: friend: companion.

Hands off: keep your hands away.

Cat's paw: make dumb use of.

reckon: ~~guess~~.

beseech you: beg you.

Phrases and Idioms

Note the following phrases and use them in your sentences:

At length.

In particular; not particular; so so.

All of a sudden; in haste.

The like of it.

Meddle with; meddle in; meddle-some.

Break up; break in; break away; break off.

Paid over; paid in; paid by; paid to; paid off.

As clear as; as dirty as.

Mind's eye; mental picture.

Better and better; worse and worse; worse still.

Out of the way; in the way; by the way.

Turned to stone; turn deaf ear; turn over a new leaf.

The plain truth; the bitter truth.

To and fro; up and down.

Upon the track; Off the track.

A runaway; run in; run out; run by.

Questions.

1. Who was Keawe?
2. Where did he live?
3. Which city did he visit?
4. Who gave him the bottle?
5. What was the peculiarity of the bottle?
6. Who was Lopuka?
7. What did Lopuka want?
8. What did Keawe want from the bottle?
9. Why did Keawe sell the bottle?
10. Why did Keawe want the bottle back?
11. How did Keawe get rid of the bottle?
12. Why did Kokua buy it from the old man?
13. How did Keawe finally get rid of the bottle?

THREE SUNDAYS IN A WEEK

Glossary.

trivial: small.

porpoose: huge whale-like fish.

blandest: broad: winning and polite.

wouldn't it answer: would not serve the purpose.

at random: without any plan; haphazard.

the plum: the best: the additional advantage.

scapegrace: a graceless and reckless person.

bumper: large wine glass.

if I die for it: even if I were to lose my life.

eccentric: queer person.

sturdy defence: strongly defended.

extorted: taken by compulsion.

bequeathed: to leave by will to another; to leave behind after death.

dog's existence: miserable life.

House of Correction: Jail for delinquent children.

badger: finally persuade: break down resistance by repeated efforts.

besieged: begged: implored.

importunities: appeals.

imprudent: reckless: tactless: hasty.

broach: mention.

punctilious: exact observance of forms or little points.

setting at naught: breaking without hesitation.

inviolable: which cannot be broken.

disposition: temperament.

ingenuity: cleverness.

pith: in a nutshell: the substance.

contrived: managed.

huzzy: a bold girl. (The father uses the word playfully.)

you jade: This is another substitute for 'huzzy.'

whist: a game of cards. It was not considered morally good to play cards on a Sunday.

Idioms and Phrases

Note the following phrases carefully and use them in your own sentences:

Make sure of.

At random.

Man of word.

Be off.

Dog's existence.

Cut off; cut in; cut up.

Made up, made by, made in, made of.

Under such circumstances.

By the way; by the by.

All in a row.

Exercises

1. Who was Kate?
 2. Who was Robert?
 3. What did Robert want from his uncle?
 4. Why did the uncle refuse?
 5. How did Robert win?
 6. What did Kate explain?
 7. Who was Captain Pratt?
 8. Who was Captain Smitherton?
 9. How did three Sundays come in a week?
 10. Why does Robert call his uncle eccentric?
-

so it will; he is right, too. The fact is, we are all right and thus three Sundays have come together in a week."

Smitherton: (After a pause.) "By the by Pratt! Kate has us completely. What fools we two are! The earth, you know, is twenty-four thousand miles in circumference. Now this globe of the earth turns upon its own axis . . . revolves . . . spins round . . . these twenty-four thousand miles of extent, going from west to east, in precisely twenty-four hours. Do you undrestand, Sir? . . . "

Uncle: "To be sure . . . to be sure . . . "

Smitherton: "Well, sir; that is at the rate of one thousand miles per hour. Now suppose that I sail from this position a thousand miles east. Of course I anticipate the rising of the sun here at London by just one hour. I see the sun rise one hour before you do. Proceeding, in the same direction, yet another thousand miles, I anticipate the rising by two hours . . . another thousand, and I anticipate it by three hours, and so on, until I go entirely round the globe, and back to this spot, when, having gone twenty-four thousand miles east, I anticipate the rising of the London sun by no less than twenty-four hours; that is to say, I am a day in advance of